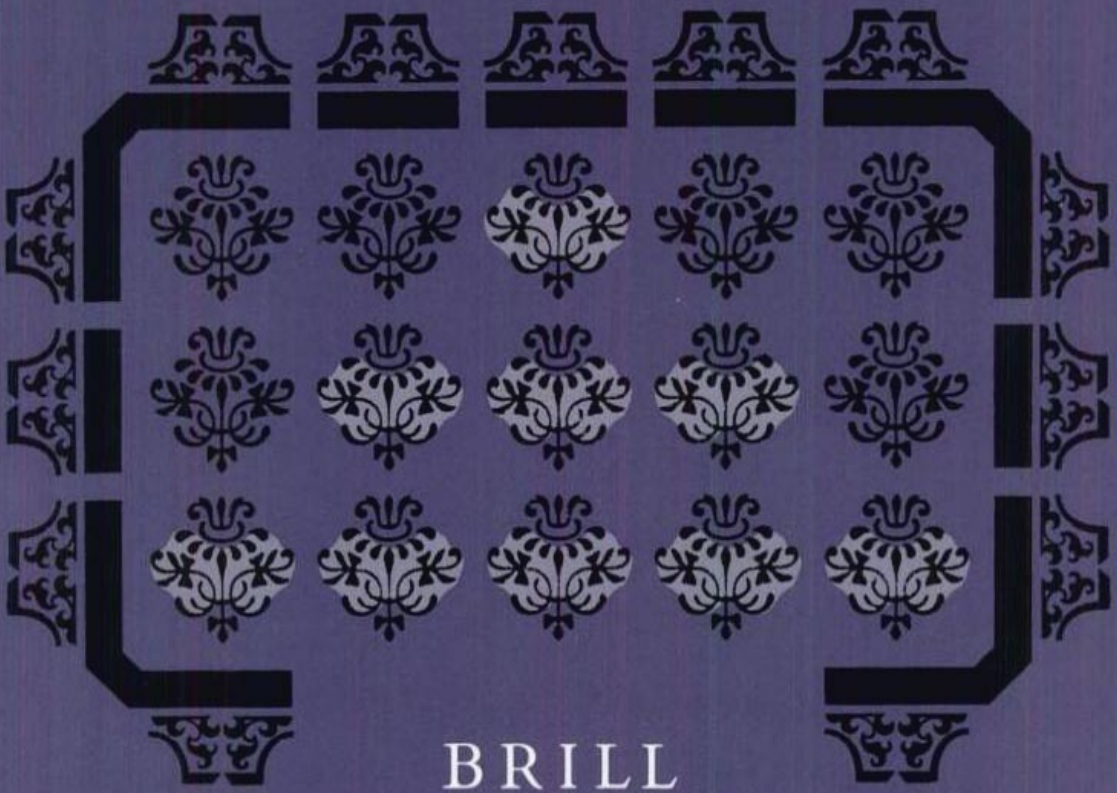
Transformations of the Inner Self in Ancient Religions

Edited by
Jan Assmann &
Guy G. Stroumsa



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AND

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INTRODUCTION

J. Assmann and G.G. Stroumsa

From their earliest forms down to the deep transformations they underwent in late antiquity, the religions of the Near East have usually been studied mainly for their theological ideas. In sharp contrast to this approach and particularly in the last generation, the study of Greek religion, for instance, has greatly benefited from new scholarly perspectives that emphasized both the anthropological dimensions of religion and the implications of theology, myth and cult for the evolution of anthropological conceptions. As is well known, the birth of the western conception of the individual has generally been attributed to ancient Greece.

The various chapters of this volume are the fruit of a project that was essentially concerned with aspects of the anthropological, rather than the theological dimensions of Near Eastern and Mediterranean religions, ranging from the "primary" religions of the archaic period and their complex developments in Egypt and Mesopotamia to the "soteriological" movements and "secondary" religions that emerged in late antiquity. Interpretive and comparative in nature, this project sought to uncover new dimensions of the relationships between religion and culture, and thus to better understand the formation of western anthropological conceptions. It is not only intended to bring new conceptual and factual results, but also to propose a breakthrough in method. We hope to have offered new models for the comparative study of the role of religion in ancient societies.

Recent years have seen the remarkable growth, among social scientists and philosophers alike, of the study of the person or "self". The last major effort in this trend is represented by Charles Taylor's *Sources of the Self* (Cambridge, Mass., 1989). This work is an impressive attempt at retracing the genealogy of the modern person, which, in a sense, could be described as an "anti-Foucault" statement of sorts Michel Foucault's *Les mots et les choses* having been widely perceived as heralding the death of man. Taylor's book, however, is not devoid of religious presuppositions and implications. It is precisely because Taylor sees the sacred as being transformed, but not

quite evacuated, in the modern world, that "man" still remains a concrete presence for him. In his and Foucault's view, there is a direct correlation between theology and anthropology. Divine and human persons depend upon one another. The implications of such reflexions are of immediate and crucial importance. The construction of a new code of ethics is predicated upon a humanism that is religious in essence, if not directly linked to a church.

Although anthropologists (since Marcel Mauss's seminal study, *la personne*, published just sixty years ago) and philosophers alike consider the problem of the relationships between conceptions of the divine and of the human to be a crucial one, their solutions seem to be faulted, because they both lack the historical and comparative perspective which alone could generalize, confirm or infirm the points they are making.

Under these conditions, it seems to us that historians of religion are in a position to make a meaningful contribution to a problem which today stands at the very "front" of scholarly discourse. During the last generation, a new interest in the religious anthropology of ancient Greece has been developed, in particular by the French historians of Greek religion around Jean-Pierre Vernant and his colleagues, and thanks to the accomplishments of Walter Burkert. Important as it may be, however, ancient Greek culture and religion represent a very peculiar case in the world of antiquity. We sought to broaden results achieved by classicists to include the various religions of the ancient Near East, by offering a contribution to the archaeology of western conceptions of the person. By "religious anthropology", we mean here both the explicit and the implicit concepts of man, person and individual, as well as their frames of reference within religious traditions and "cultural texts". We sought to study these concepts in a comparative way thoughout the religious cultures of the Near East, Egypt and the Eastern Mediterranean. The chronological scope of our investigation begins with archaic religions such as those of Egypt and Mesopotamia and proceeds from there to the deep transformations of monotheism and salvation religions in late antiquity: Rabbinic Judaism, Early christianity, Gnosis, Manichaeism, Sasanian Zoroastrianism.

This period of two millennia witnessed several decisive transformations and revolutionary disruptions. The first religious revolution in the recorded history of mankind is the monotheistic cult of Aten,

instituted in the middle of the 14th c. B.C.E. by the Egyptian king Amenhotep IV (Akhenaten). This innovation, however, did not lead to any lasting tradition, because it was exterminated shortly after the death of its founder. Later revolutions that rejected both the "own" tradition as well as other religions (which now became stigmatized as "paganism") changed the world in a way that still determines the modern situation; they include Zoroastrianism, the prophetic religion of Ancient Israel from its early stages of "Monoyahwism" to its latest, developed monotheistic stages, furthermore Christianity, Judaism, Manichaeism, Gnosticism, Hermeticism and other movements of Late Antiquity until the rise of Islam, in many respects the most typical secondary religion.

Common to all these new religions is the introduction of a new distinction and the shifting of a boundary. The new distinction concerns truth and untruth in religion. Primary religions are based on distinctions such as sacred and profane, pure and impure, but not on the distinction between truth and falsehood. The idea of "false" or "fictitious" gods is as alien to primary religions as it is constitutive of founded religions from Akhenaten until Mohamed. This new distinction leads to the shifting or redefinition of the boundary between sacred and profane or pure and impure, which is now transformed from an inner into an outer boundary separating "us" from "them". The distinction between priests and profane people now tends to be applied to the difference between the members of the own group, who come to be defined as "a kingdom of priests," and outsiders, who are excluded as impure and profane. Even in the context of Christianity, where many "primary" institutions such as priesthood, hierarchy and sacred mysteries survive or were even re-introduced, the outer boundary by far dominates all inner distinctions.

It seems obvious that these changes on the plane of religion and theology imply corresponding changes on the plane of anthropology, that is, new concepts of man, of the person, of community and society and of the human condition in general. Until now, religious anthropology has stressed continuities and similarities. The primary interest in studying topics such as the sacred, sacrifice, myth, prayer, shamanism, etc. was to uncover the common phenomenology of *homo religiosus*. In this volume, we are following a different, if not opposite track. Our interest lies in the search for disruptions, discontinuities, changes, redefinitions and innovations, shifts and mutations,

all of which may be used to support our hypothesis that radically different forms of religion must necessarily entail radically new forms of *homo religiosus*.

Both parts of this volume concentrate on themes that are closely related to the genesis of what Paul and Augustine defined as "inner man", which is undoubtedly of fundamental importance for the rise of the western subject. But instead of dealing with so broad and abstract a subject in general and theoretical terms, we preferred to concentrate on specific problems and phenomena that would allow us to study the origins and transformations of early conceptions of human interiority on a more concrete level. For this purpose, we chose such concepts that were in themselves already related to forms and aspects of inner transformation, such as initiation, conversion, purification, confession, repentance and penitence. The first part of the volume concentrates on "conversion" as a quintessential form of inner transformation, including forms and concepts of confession and repentance that emphasize the aspect of transformation. The second part follows up, in more detail, on the problem of guilt associated with rites of confession and repentance. We think that this method of focussing on specific questions, rather than constructing "grand narratives", will eventually lead to a historically more accurate view of the origins of modernity and western individualism. The present volume can only be a beginning.

The "Grand Narrative" that we are attempting to replace with detailed studies in historical analysis was presented in its most accomplished and influential form by Karl Jaspers, whose concept of "Achsenzeit" (Axial Age) continued a long tradition dating back to Anquetil-Duperron in the 18th c. Jaspers' concept of "Achsenzeit" refers to precisely the same transformations of religion around the middle of the first millenium B.C.E. which we would classify as the emergence of "secondary religions". Jaspers, however, is more impressed by the temporal than by the structural analogies. The prophets of Israel, the first Greek philosophers, Zarathustra, the Buddha, Confucius would have been, roughly, contemporaries. In the wake of Jaspers, the Israeli sociologist S.N. Eisenstadt advanced the proposal to investigate what he calls "breakthroughs" in religious attitudes of the ancient world and their relationships with transformations of society and culture. Eisenstadt's model has the great advantage of being both detailed and dynamic. It transforms the concept of "Axial Age" into a process of "axialization" and even allows for contrarious

processes of "deaxialization". For Jaspers, on the other hand, the world of "pre-axial" cultures was simply a polemical and eurocentric construction: the counter-image of everything that Jaspers hailed as the classical norms and values of "axiality". In spite of his efforts to extend the concept of axiality to the Asian world at large, his values remained strictly European.

We, for our part, intend to focus even more intensively on the question of "transformation" by approaching it from both sides: from the side of "primary religions" or "pre-axial cultures", which we investigate not only in their "classical", but also in their late and latest stages, and from the side of "new" religions or "axial cultures". And we intend to study the dialectical relationships between transformations of theology and anthropology, rather than the whole spectrum of the relationships between religion, society and culture. We do insist, however, on the comparative frame of the collective research.

In other terms, we seek not so much to enrich the objective knowledge of a limited field, but rather to influence our conceptions of the interrelationships between religious and cultural phenomena.

These chapters represent versions of papers presented at two workshops, jointly organized by the editors within the framework of a research grant from the German-Israeli Foundation for Scientific Research and Development (GIF). This grant permitted an investigation of Religious Anthropology and its Transformations in the Ancient and Late Antique Near East. The papers of a first workshop (on "Soul, Self, and Body") held at Neve Ilan, Israel, in February 1995 with the cooperation of the Jacob Taubes Minerva Center for Religious Anthropology at Bar Ilan University, have been published in this series by Albert Baumgarten and the editors of this volume. At a workshop held in Heidelberg, Germany, in July 1996, we decided to focus on "Confession and Conversion." The workshop held in Jerusalem in October 1997 had "Guilt, Sin, and Rituals of Purification" as its theme. Since the scope of the project was so broad from a chronological point of view, and comparative in essence, we sought to have at least a kernel of scholars participate in both workshops, which is the reason why six of the participants contributed two chapters, one in each part of the volume. This fact may actually provide some thread of continuity between the two connected yet different aspects of the "transformations of the self" discussed in parts one and two. Although we sought to cover as many as possible of the different

cultures and religious communities involved, we make no claim of having been exhaustive. What we hope to have gained (and conveyed) is a sense of the dynamics and dialectical relationships between the various Near Eastern and Mediterranean religions from the archaic period to late antiquity, not to forget the highly enriching experience of having studied these religions together.

We wish to express our deep gratitude to the German-Israeli Foundation and its Director, Dr. Amnon Barak, who supported our project in the most generous way during the years 1994–1998. We also wish to thank Albert Baumgarten, who was extremely helpful in co-organizing the first conference on "Self, Soul and Body" at Neve Ilan and in coediting the first volume. The other two conferences were held, respectively, at the *Internationales Wissenschaftsforum Heidelberg* and the *Ratisbonne Pontifical Institute for Jewish Studies*, and we would like to thank Prof. Michael Welker, Dr. Theresa Reiter and Father Elio Paseto for their most kind hospitality and support. Members of the team of investigators were, at Jerusalem, Dr. Brouria Biton-Ashkeloni and Dr. Serge Ruzer, and at Heidelberg Dr. Robert Meyer. Their share in the results of our venture is as big as our gratitude for their never-failing engagement and dedication.

PART ONE

CONFESSION AND CONVERSION

FROM THE PARADIGM OF LAMENT AND HEARING TO THE CONVERSION PARADIGM

Fritz Stolz

1. *Preliminary remarks: Speaking of conversion*

1.1 *Conversion as individual experience*

From the very beginnings of the scientific study of religions, conversion has been a prominent theme of research. About one hundred years ago, psychological studies were carried out on conversions in North America; indeed, this marked the beginning of the field of the psychology of religion. The most prominent representatives of the developing discipline made contributions to the topic: Starbuck published an empirical study stressing the juvenile setting of the event,[1] Leuba underlined in a phenomenological study the ethical character of conversion,[2] and James dedicated two chapters of his epoch-making work on religious life to this specific experience.[3] Conversion seemed to be the center of religion in general, the Christian model was attested to be representative for the world of religions as a whole. Arthur Darby Nock in his introduction to a new edition of James' work in 1960 explicitly pointed to this supposition, himself consenting.[4] The idea of religion, in this regard, is highly individualistic: Religious experience directs human beings towards moral perfection; it reveals the mystic underground of reality to them; and it makes them aware of the hitherto hidden dimension of the person, the "uttermost self". These are typical modern qualities of religion; conversion seems to be a paradigm of religious modernity.

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[1] E.D. Starbuck, *The Psychology of Religions* (London: Scott 1899).

[2] J.H. Leuba, "Studies in the Psychology of Religious Phenomena", *American Journal of Psychology* 7 (1896).

[3] W. James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience. A Study in Human Nature* (London: Fount Paperbacks, 1977, reimp. of the 1960 edition, originally 1902): 194ff.--James explicitly refers to the previous studies of Starbuck and Leuba.

[4] "Most of the material is drawn from Christian sources . . . James would probably have liked G. van der Leeuw's dictum that there are only quite few thoughts which it is given to humanity to think about the divine . . ." A.D. Nock in the reedition of James, Varieties: 20–21.

Nock, for his part, approached conversion from the historical side. His famous work on religious history from Alexander the Great to Augustine deeply influenced historical research on the Hellenistic and early Christian era in this century.[5] Thus there are two prototypical epochs of conversion: Late antiquity on the one hand, and the Protestant milieus of Pietism, Revivalism, Puritanism and Evangelicalism on the other.

Both concepts of conversion are shaped by a certain type of individualism. The typical conversion of Antiquity, from one religion to another, requires an individual who is able to choose a personally adequate religion, against the traditional social bonds. The conversions of Protestantism require an analogous individual who is able to turn away from worldly behavior, from the values of the surrounding majority. In both cases, conversion concerns the "inmost self" which is constituted by a religious choice; religion belongs to this "inmost self", choosing its personal "truth". The phenomenological and comparative approach points to an anthropological level which is elementary for religion in general. According to many scholars even today, religion is conceptualized in correspondence to the "inmost self," which came into being (not exclusively, but to a certain extent) in the historical contexts of conversions.[6]

1.2 *Conversion as social pattern*

In the last decades, however, a new approach to the phenomenon has developed. Sociologists of religion have revised the case of conversion, stressing the social aspect of the process. Conversion is now treated as a pattern of communication.[7] Narrations of conversions

[5] A.D. Nock, *Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933, ²1961).

[6] The influence of William James for the formative phase of religious studies is hard to overestimate. In the German speaking world, the work of Rudolf Otto had a similar effect.

[7] The approach developed in English speaking countries, cf. W.E. Conn (Ed.), *Conversion: Perspectives on Personal and Social Transformation* (New York: Alba House, 1978); J.A. Beckford, "Accounting for Conversion", *The British Journal of Sociology* 29 (1978): 249–262; J.H. Fichter, *Autobiographies of Conversion* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1987); P.G. Stromberg, *Language and Self-Transformation. A Study of the Christian Conversion Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). Later this type of research was adopted by German-speaking scholars, B. Ulmer, "Konversionserzählungen als rekonstruktive Gattung. Erzählerische Mittel und Strategien bei der Rekonstruktion eines Bekehrungserlebnisses" *Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 17 (1988): 19–33; M. Wohlrab-Sahr/H. Knoblauch/V. Krech (Eds.), *Religiöse Konversion: Systematische und fallorientierte*

have been analyzed; they prove to be stereotyped in a very high degree. The styling of narrations depends on the group that forms the social background of the conversion experience. This means that experience is formed by the pattern of communication; it is not possible to describe the experience itself in a form prior to that formed by communication patterns. This does not mean that experience disappears completely in communication; we have to take into account a mutual dependence: Experiences are shaped by patterns of communication, and patterns of communication create new experience. The variability of the conversion pattern depends on the rigidity of the classification system that is applied within a group.

Patterns of conversion are not invariant; they develop in parallel with the development of the group as a whole; e.g., conversions in the context of Jehovah's Witnesses have changed typically according to the structure and the organization of the community.[8]

Christian evangelical narratives about conversion emphasize that conversion is the center of the biography; thus it is the most individual point of one's life. Many evangelical Christians know the exact date and the exact time of conversion. But even if conversion is a very individual experience, it is not original at all; all members of the group tell stories about very similar experiences.

Conversion means a complete reversal of one's life. A life of darkness, of perversion, of sin turns into a redeemed life. Even members who have grown up in the group, i.e. children of evangelical parents, experience such conversions. An observer from outside would not notice a change of behavior. In this case, the formative power of the communication pattern is obvious: Life cannot really be understood without the turning point of conversion—so conversion *has* to happen, even if it seems not to be necessary. The pattern of communication is so strong that it induces the experience.

A last remark is important. The word "conversion", although a traditional term of Protestant theology, has become something like a shibbolet for a certain type of Protestantism; it is characteristic of evangelical or even fundamentalistic groups, at least in Europe. If you ask a non-evangelical Christian if he is converted, he will hesitate

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Studien in soziologischer Perspektive (Konstanz: Universitätsverlag, 1996) a.o. Introduction into the present sociological and psychological discussion: L.R. Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1993).

[8] Beckford, Accounting.

to give a positive answer, even if he is a faithful member of the church. Conversion, obviously, is no longer a prototype of religiousness in general. It has, at least in Europe, gained the connotation of sectarianism.

The patterns of communication found by sociologists have a historical background; they are represented as literary genres.[9] Christian tracts regularly contain biographical sketches centered around the turning point of conversion. This type of literature has its roots in Pietistic and Puritan milieus; the description of one's own life as a typical example for a Christian biography is one of the normal ways of proclaiming the Christian message. Conversion and rebirth: this is the center of a religious movement that is at the same time conservative and modern; conservative with respect to the contents of the message, modern with respect to the individualistic application of the message.

Conversion and rebirth have always been traditional themes of Christian theology and liturgy. With respect to the social function of conversion, the development of the topic is very instructive:[10]

In the classic Protestant doctrine, the main points of the Christian message were not used as a structure for the biography; especially for Luther, justification was not a well defined biographical turning point but a lasting aspect of Christian life, just as sin was a lasting aspect of Christian life. According to the concept of the Reformation, sin and justification are simultaneous and the character of life is ambiguous, whereas the Pietistic and Puritan conception tends towards disambiguation; there are two clearly separated phases of darkness and light. Ambiguity and disambiguation are aspects not only of the interpretation of life; they are important also for the concept of God and society. Luther's concept of God is very ambivalent (he looks for clarification by the distinction between the hidden and the revealed God), and his idea of the church is directed by the dichotomy of the invisible and the visible church.

On the other hand, before and beyond the Reformation, in Catholicism, conversion had its place within the institutionalized process of penance; it meant a (temporary) withdrawal from evil, a cyclic

[9] American material: A. Jon, *American Personal Religious Accounts 1600–1980. Toward an Inner History of America's Faiths* (New York: Studies in American Religion, Vol. 8, 1983).

[10] Cf. the article "Bekehrung" (various authors) in: Theologische Realenzyklopädie V, 439–486.

passage from ambiguity to disambiguation. Thus conversion is not a unique but a repetitive transformation; whereas conversion in a pietistic milieu serves as means of self-control (the convert has to look for maintaining the state of being born-again), the repetitive Catholic conversion within the sacrament of penance serves the control of the ecclesiastical organization.

In the first centuries of Christianity however the situation was quite different. Conversion meant the exchange of a religious paradigm. We can assume that, normally, the consequences for the convert were incisive. The renunciation of traditional sacrifices, for instance, excluded the convert from important performances of communal life; the biographical break was very important. Ambiguity becomes the marker of the abandoned "pagan" world, converting to Christianity brings the specific disambiguation. The individuality induced by this type of conversion is very accentuated in different dimensions (ritual, social, ethical).

This short survey of the historical evolution of conversion as a pattern of communication gives an idea of the variability of this pattern with respect to function and meaning. Strictly speaking, there is not even one constant through the whole history of conversion apart from the term itself (though, strictly speaking again, *conversio* in Late Antiquity has not the same signification as the modern English *conversion*).

These results contrast with the clear-cut picture of conversion we dealt with in the first section of this paper—a conversion which, in its basic qualities, ought to be a universal human phenomenon, even more: a model for religious experience *par excellence*. The hermeneutical problem is obvious. We have to take in account that one's cultural background shapes the reconstruction of historically very remote situations of communication. The effects of this projection can be balanced by the elaboration of the historical relativity of one's own cultural history. The European history of "conversion" reveals different dimensions, which serve to describe the historical phenomena that seem to be related but lack an invariable set of characteristics.[11]

[11] The problem of defining conversion is reminiscent of the difficulties in finding an overall working (substantial) definition for "religion"; Saler speaks, following Wittgenstein, of "family resemblance". In fact, the method of Comparative Religion cannot look for "ideal types of phenomena" but has to develop classifications for descriptions of resemblances. B. Saler, *Conceptualizing Religion: Immanent Anthropologists, Transcendent Natives, and Unbounded Categories* (Leiden: Brill, 1993).

1.3 *Theoretical consequences*

On a higher level of abstraction, the previous considerations make clear that the phenomena discussed can be described according to different points of view. Each of these points reveals correspondences and differences between various types of conversion. They are apt to describe an historical evolution—but they can be applied to similar phenomena in other cultural and historical areas as well.

1. The processes we dealt with can be described as transitions and transformations. Such transitions may lead into a new social group (be it respected or disregarded) or into a new social position. Obviously this point of view brings "conversions" in a relation to rites of initiation.[12] Transitions can be meant as unique; they can mark a repetitive temporal structure. The transition can undergo a "spiritualization"; in these cases, there is an inner way to be gone, a rearrangement of religious or ethical orientation. Transitions correspond to transformations: There are transformations of behavior and of morality; there are transformations of the mental horizon; new experiences become available. Again, this point of view is essential for initiatory rites.

2. The transitions and transformations in question are formed and induced by patterns of communication. This is true for transitions and transformations not only in the outer but also in the inner, spiritual reality. The development of outer to inner transformation (or the reverse) ought to be reflected as a shift in the communication pattern.

3. There are very different relations between "community" (or communities) and "individual". The transition can happen within one and the same community (especially if it has a repetitive character); it can lead from a large, chaotic to a small, well-ordered community, from a community of sin to a community of justice, etc. The admission to the transition can be obligatory or deliberate; the choice for or against the transition can require lower or higher efforts. Accordingly, the individual can behave in correspondence or in contradiction to the surrounding milieu; the experience of distance and dissociation can induce a certain type of individualism. On the other

[12] The social aspect of initiations has been stressed since the publication of van Gennep's initial contribution to the discussion; A. van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (London: Routledge and Kegan, 1977; original French publication 1909).

hand, there are communities with very strict social control that stress the importance of individual experience.

4. For the description and interpretation of the processes of transition and transformation, the classificatory terms ambiguity/disambiguation are very useful. Transitions are supposed to lead from a state of confusion or ambiguity towards clarification; therefore, the transition has the quality of disambiguation. Initiation rituals very often introduce a phase of ambiguity, even of chaotic uncertainty, in order to transform it into a newly consolidated world.[13] This structure appears to be rather universal; it characterizes conversions and related processes. Ambiguity and disambiguation occur on the symbolic and on the societal level: Disambiguation on the symbolic level means that differences in the symbol system become clearer or, at least, that experiences of ambivalence are articulated. Disambiguation on the societal level would mean that differences have social consequences—e.g. by a kind of separation, by sectarianism, etc.

As mentioned, the development of comparative perspectives for describing different types of conversion brought to mind the resemblance of conversion and initiation patterns. As a matter of fact, in Antiquity there was a development from "initiation" to "conversion"—we will discuss the degree to which such labels make sense. But firstly, we will test our tools of description in another historical complex of communication: The paradigm of lament and hearing.

2. *The paradigm of lament and hearing in antiquity*

2.1 *Rituals of restitution*

In many ancient cultures there is an institution of healing individual and social anomalies—such as serious cases of illness, misfortune, etc. In the case of such anomalies, therapeutic measures take place. The suffering people consult specialists, often in the temple; and they get a treatment, hoping for a quick restitution of individual and social health. The communication of these processes of restitution is reflected in many literary documents.

The first research done in this direction was carried out by Hermann

[13] The importance of this phase was stressed by van Gennep, Rites, too; further theoretical considerations by V. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (New York: De Gruyter, 1969).

Gunkel and his pupil Joachim Begrich.[14] Gunkel and Begrich introduced sociological questions into the history of cultic literature. They recognized the basic connection between lament and thanksgiving song: The lament belongs to a ritual part treating the disintegration; it is positively answered by a representative of the godhead, and it ends often with a vow, a proclamation of confidence and an outlook on the expected salvation. The song of thanksgiving looks back to misery. The thanksgiver praises God and invites the other participants of the celebration to join in.

Of course, this is a highly simplified view. It is probable that there were historical and geographical variations of the cultic forms in ancient Israel.[15] Mesopotamian texts represent a differentiated structure of laments, incantations, prayers, etc. The different genres (*šu-ila, maqlû, šurpu, eršaḫunga*, etc.) have a complicated history; sometimes, the ritual background is more or less clear.[16] The crucial point is quite clear however: The society disposes of an institution for the reintegration of disintegrated persons. Thanksgiving is an ordinary element in this process of successful reintegration.

This element of thanksgiving is the subject we will consider.

2.2 *"Post-cultic" development*

In the last years, there has been a vivid discussion among orientalists of "official" or "public" religion on the one hand, and private religion on the other.[17] This distinction has produced important insights

[14] H. Gunkel/J. Begrich, *Einleitung in die Psalmen. Die Gattungen der religiösen Lyrik Israels* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1933, ³1975).

[15] The old Israelite healing rituals have been studied repeatedly; cf. K. Seybold, *Das Gebet des Kranken im Alten Testament. Untersuchungen zur Bestimmung und Zuordnung der Krankheits- und Heilungspsalmen* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1973). E. Gerstenberger, *Der bittende Mensch. Bittritual und Klagelied des Einzelnen im Alten Testament* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1980).

[16] Some information is available in the articles "Gebet", in: *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* 3 (1957–1971): 156–170 and "Medizin", in: *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* 7 (1987–1990): 623–629.

[17] As to private and personal religion: Th. Jacobsen, *The Treasures of Darkness. A History of Mesopotamian Religion* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1976): 147–164). Some important studies had their origin in comparative research about developments in Mesopotamia and Israel: H. Vorländer, *Mein Gott. Die Vorstellung vom persönlichen Gott im Alten Orient und im Alten Testament* (Neukirchen/Kevelaer: Neukirchener Verlag, 1975); R. Albertz, *Persönliche Frömmigkeit und offizielle Religion. Religionsinterner Pluralismus in Israel und Babylon* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1978); K. van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria and Israel* (Leiden: Brill 1996).

in different religious areas; but we have to take into consideration that the problem of intrareligious variety is much more complex. In the ancient Near East there exists a family religion with ancestral worship; there are local cults with characteristic functions; there are, as we have seen, rituals for the restitution or the social reintegration of individuals; there is a state religion, which is expressed by the big rituals like the New Year Festival. There are links between these types of religions; the family religion of the king is important for the state as a whole. So instead of dichotomizing religion into "private" and "official" religion it would be more appropriate to speak of different societal subsystems that are separately symbolized.

This intrareligious pluralism creates a new type of religious privacy with innovatory characteristics: The traditional religious orientation no longer responds to the growing individualistic needs. As a result of this development, a special type of "private religion" emerges that is documented in texts dealing with religious problems in the strict sense of the word. One of these texts is the famous Akkadian composition *ludlul bēl nēmeqi*.[18] The literary structure of the text reminds of a thanksgiving hymn. But in fact the text has quite another function than the classic form. I will report the contents and read some passages that in my view are especially important.

The beginning of the text (except for the first line) was missing until Wiseman published a tablet from Kalah.[19] It contains an invocation of Marduk:

> I will praise the lord of wisdom, solicitous god,
> furious in the night, calming in the daylight:
> Marduk! lord of wisdom, solicitous god,
> furious in the night, calming in the daylight,
> whose anger engulfs like a tempest,
> whose breeze is sweet as the breathe of morn. (I,1ff.)

The poem contains many traditional elements. It looks back to a period of extreme misery. The well known motifs of lament occur: Demons of sickness and bad luck attack, etc.

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[18] W.G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960): 21ff.—Translations: R.D. Biggs in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969): 596ff.; B.R. Foster, *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature* (2 vols.; Bethesda: CDL Press, 1994): 308ff. W. v. Soden, in: *Texte zur Umwelt des Alten Testaments* III/1 (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1990): 110ff.

[19] D.J. Wiseman, "A New Text of the Babylonian Poem of the Righteous Sufferer", *Anatolian Studies* 30 (1980): 104–107.

Social disintegration is especially stressed:

> The king, the flesh of the gods, the sun of the peoples,
> his heart is enraged with me, and cannot be appeased. (I,55f.)
>
> My friend has become foe,
> my companion has become a wretch and a devil (I,84f.)
>
> When my acquaintance sees me, he passes by on the other side,
> My family treat me as an alien. (I,91f.)

The misery is in sharp contrast to the fact that the sufferer was a pious and righteous man; so his suffering is not justified:

> For myself, I gave attention to supplication and prayer:
> To me, prayer was discretion, sacrifice my rule. (II,23f.)

The suffering has a religious dimension. The traditional coping strategies for misfortune and disintegration have failed:

> The exorcist *(āšipu)* has not diagnosed the nature of my complaint,
> nor has the diviner *(barû)* put a time limit on my illness. (II,110f.)

Furthermore, the personal god and the personal goddess no longer assume their protective duty:

> My god has forsaken me and disappeared,
> my goddess has failed me and keeps a distance . . .
>
> I called to my god, but he did not answer me
> I prayed to my goddess, but she did not raise her head (II,4f.)

The disappearing of the personal god is a common motif of laments.[20] But normally the personal god disappears because of a fault of the worshipper. In this case, there is no reason for the inactivity of the protecting god.

There is a consequence of these facts which is drawn in a reflexive part of the poem:

> What is proper to oneself is an offence to one's god,
> what in one's one heart seems despicable is proper to one's god.
> Who knows the will of the gods in heaven?
> Who understands the plans of the underworld gods?
> Where have mortals learnt the way of a god?
> Who was alive yesterday is dead today,
> For a minute he was dejected, suddenly he is exuberant . . . (II,34ff.)

[20] Some examples: Foster, Muses: 640ff.

Eventually, the sufferer gets saved. The turning point of the composition consists of a series of three dreams. The sinner is released, health is restored, social reintegration is accomplished. The individual thanksgiving leads to the traditional invitation for a common praise of the redeeming god:

> Mortals, as many as they are, give praise to Marduk!

The poem does not end here; the final lines are badly damaged, it seems that they contain some practical aspects of the Marduk worship.

The text is interesting in many respects. I will give some hints, according to the methodological guidelines in the introductory paragraph.

– The traditional pattern of the thanksgiving poem is well preserved, but in the text, the validity of the underlying ritual process is put in question. The experience of salvation is transferred to a new level of experience, a level higher than the traditional ritual context. The author of the composition is known, and it is probable that he can be identified with a person known from historical texts. So the text deals with the biographical experiences of that man; but the experiences can be generalized, they can be applied to any biography of a sufferer who is not satisfied by the traditional cultic coping strategies for experiences of misery and temptation.

– One of the important characteristics of the poem is the exaltation of one god, Marduk. The personal worship of Marduk is more effective than the traditional cultic behavior; the innovatory personal religion prevails over the traditional cult of the community. The theological aspect of this revaluation consists in a theological concentration on Marduk. The Marduk-religion attested in this text has a tendency towards exclusivism. Similar concentrations on other gods appear in other composition which belong to this type of personal religion.[21]

The text contains a striking anthropological reflection: Human beings are in principle not apt to recognize the god's will and essence.[22] This is the reason for the failure of traditional rituals and

[21] The rise of Marduk in the 2nd millenium was directed by different factors; cf. W. Sommerfeld, *Der Aufstieg Marduks. Die Stellung Marduks in der babylonischen Religion des zweiten Jahrtausends v. Chr.* (Neukirchen/Kevelaer: Neukirchener Verlag, 1982); as for the process of individualization cf. F. Stolz, *Einführung in den biblischen Monotheismus* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1996): 46ff.

[22] The modifications of cultic genres in a sapiental milieu are discussed in: F. Stolz, "Tradition orale et tradition écrite dans les religions de la Mésopotamie

traditionally correct behavior towards the gods. The only way of gaining contact with Marduk is a revelation; the vision that marks the turning point is not mediated by priests. The adequate human reaction to that revelation consists in the praise: *ludlul bēl nēmeqi—apātum mala bašû* ^{d}*Marduk dullā*.

– All these new features of the symbol system make the personal religion fit for coping with a more complex world. The world order is no longer granted by common patterns of understanding and digesting but needs a personal effort to establish an apt conception. The god of this personally elaborated world order is ambivalent. As the introduction shows, this experience is very important. The text represents a coping strategy for enduring this divine ambiguity.

Ludlul bēl nemēqi has often been compared with the book of Job; in fact, there are some similar problems.[23] G. Lambert points to another text in comparison with *ludlul*—he calls it "The Babylonian *Pilgrim's Progress*" (Lambert 1960, 27). So I am not the first to compare Mesopotamian and modern Christian texts of conversion. The cultic paradigm of lament and salvation has developed into a paradigm of conversion.

Very similar phenomena occur in many psalms of the Old Testament. Although the theory of the cultic setting of the genres was worked out on the basis of these psalms, only very few compositions really fit into the postulated patterns. Research on the genres of the Old Testament cultic literature comes to a paradox: The reconstruction of ideal types of communication is possible and promising—but the "pure" types are hardly attested. The underlying patterns are still recognizable, but the literary composition represents a modification of the pattern, often a very radical modification.

This is easy to understand. The psalms were not only used within their original ritual setting, but also after the breakdown of the cult. The traditional social and cultic communities ceased to exist as a consequence of the political catastrophes which overcame Israel; the exile was the culminating point of a series of historical disasters. The

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antique", in: Ph. Borgeaud (Ed.), *La mémoire des religions* (Genève: Labor et Fides, 1988): 21–35; F. Stolz, "Von der Weisheit zur Spekulation", in: H.-J. Klimkeit (Ed.), *Biblische und außerbiblische Spruchweisheit* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1991): 45–64.

[23] H.-P. Müller, *Das Hiobproblem. Seine Stellung und Entstehung im Alten Orient und im Alten Testament* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1978); J.G. Janzen, "The Place of the Book of Job in the History of Israel's Religion", in: P. Miller/P.D. Hanson/S.D. McBride, *Ancient Israelite Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987): 523–538.

further transmission of the psalms happened in new conditions—in subcultural circles whose worship of Yahweh did not depend on tradition but on decision. Genres and attitudes of literature and piety in these milieus could be called "post-cultic".[24]

It would be very informative to study poems such as Psalm 30, a thanksgiving hymn that clearly shows symptoms of a development comparable to that of *ludlul bēl nemēqi*.[25] Just a few remarks:

The introduction is very traditional:

> I will exalt thee, o Lord,
> thou hast lifted me up
> and hast not let my enemies make merry over me.
> O Lord, my God, I cried to thee and thou didst heal me . . . (Ps 30,1ff.)

The poem gives thanks for healing and salvation. But it is not only a matter of restoring the previous quality of life. The sufferer has learnt from his experience of misery:

> Carefree as I was, I had said,
> "I can never be shaken".

The sufferer of *ludlul bēl nemēqi* and the sufferer of Psalm 30, both righteous sufferers, had to learn that the divine order is not manifest in the world. Thus the idea of god is shaped by ambiguity:

> In his anger he is disquiet, in his favour there is life.
> Tears may linger at nightfall,
> but joy comes in the morning.

Coping with ambiguity is an aim of many "post-cultic" psalms, especially of the "psalms of confidence"—e.g., Ps 23:

> Thou spreadest a table for me in the sight of my enemies;
> thou hast richly bathed my head with oil, and my cup runs over.
> Goodness and love unfailing, these will follow me all the days of my life,
> and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long. (Ps 23,5f.)

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[24] F. Stolz, *Psalmen im nachkultischen Raum* (Zürich: TVZ, 1983).

[25] Normally, Ps 30 is compared with texts of Egyptian personal religion; cf. K. Seybold, *Die Psalmen. Eine Einführung* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer : 169ff.; K. Seybold, *Die Psalmen* (Tübingen: Mohr 1996): 125. To the Egyptian texts in question: J. Assmann, *Ägypten. Theologie und Frömmigkeit einer frühen Hochkultur.* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1984): 221ff.

In the traditional cultic pattern, the proclamation of confidence represents a turning point; it anticipates the imminent salvation. In poems like Psalm 23, confidence turns into an attitude.[26]

It goes without saying that there are many differences between the Marduk theology of a composition like *ludlul bēl nemēqi* and a Yahweh theology as represented in late Old Testament psalms. However, some common traits of transforming traditional cultic religion to innovatory personal religion are quite clear.

2.3 *The* hôdajôt *of Qumran*

The thanksgiving psalm is the most prominent form of prayer preserved in the Qumran literature. I am not able to enter into an extended discussion on these psalms[27] but will point out some characteristics of the poems beginning with the word *ʾôdᵉka ʾᵃdonaj kî* . . .

The *hôdajôt* are collected in a special literary collection. But there is also a similar thanksgiving psalm in an appendix of the Community Rule (X,9–XI,22). The rules end in column IX; in column X,1b–8a there is a cultic calendar and this poem of thanksgiving which, however, does not begin with *ʾôdᵉka ʾᵃdonaj kî* . . . Terms other than *hôdā* are used more frequently for the praise of God (*hôdā* X,23). The text seems to be less stereotyped than the *hôdajôt* in the so-called scroll. There is a debate as to whether the link between community rule, cultic calendar and thanksgiving psalm makes sense or if the connection between these parts is rather arbitrary. If we assume such a sense, it could be formulated as follows: The experience of salvation consists in following the rules and the calendar of the community. There is one basic healing for an Israelite: to adhere to the Qumran community. I think this interpretation makes sense and is confirmed by a short overview of pertinent themes in the *hodajôt*.

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[26] Bathing, anointing and drinking have a metaphorical value, cf. H. Spieckermann, *Heilsgegenwart. Eine Theologie der Psalmen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989): 263ff. However, this interpretation of the text is disputed. Some scholars assume a non-metaphorical, concrete significance of the passage, see S. Mittmann, "Aufbau und Einheit des Danklieds Psalm 23", *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 77 (1980): 1–23. An overview of possible approaches: J.V. Sandberger, "Hermeneutische Aspekte der Psalmeninterpretation dargestellt an Psalm 23", in: K. Seybold/E. Zenger (Eds.), *Neue Wege der Psalmenforschung* (Freiburg: Herder, 1994): 317–344. On the significance of the declaration of confidence see Stolz, Psalmen: 51–52.

[27] Bibliography to the literature on the *hôdajôt* (till 1989) by Ulrich Dahmen in N. Lohfink, *Lobgesänge der Armen* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1990).

In many cases, the experience the supplicant thanks for is expressed in quite a traditional manner -e.g., "thou hast redeemed my soul from the pit" (1QH III,19), "thou hast placed me beside a fountain of streams" (1QH VIII,4), etc. But there is a very typical variation of the salvation topic. Sometimes, the prayer expresses thankfulness that the speaker has become a member of the group he belongs to. The beginning of a fragmentary psalm reads as follows:

> I thank thee, my god, for thou hast not cast my lot in the congregation of vanity,
> nor hast thou placed my portion in the council of the cunning.
> Thou hast led me to thy grace and forgiveness . . . (1QH VII,34ff.)

There is a characteristic self-understanding of the congregation. They are the "poor" people:

> I thank thee, o Lord,
> for thou hast fastened thine eye upon me.
> Thou hast saved me from the zeal of lying interpreters
> and from the congregation of those who seek smooth things.
> Thou hast redeemed the soul of the poor one
> whom they planned to destroy
> by spilling his blood because he served thee. (1QH II,31ff.)

> I thank thee, o Lord,
> for thou hast not abandoned the fatherless
> or despised the poor . . . (1QH V,20ff.)

The term "poor" occurs here and elsewhere in connection with "fatherless", "widow" etc.—classic roles of socially marginalized persons. The "theology of the poor" of Old Testament and Qumran psalms has often been treated.[28] I would like to stress but one point. In "classic" cultic texts, to be poor means an existence in the margins of society, an existence granted by special protection by the king. In the post-cultic development, the term "poor" becomes an auto-designation of religiously marginalized groups that see themselves in the center. A social marginalization may be an additional quality, but this is not necessary. So we become aware of a reversal of values: The formerly precarious state of the poor has become a favored state.

In the case of Qumran, adherence to the group has without any

[28] Especially with respect to the *hodajôt*: Lohfink, Lobgesänge.

doubt social implications. The separation of the thanksgiver from his original social bonds is emphasised:

> They have banished me from my land
> like a bird from its nest;
> all my friends and brethren are driven far from me
> and hold me for a broken vessel
> And they, teachers of lie and falsehood,
> have schemed against me a devilish scheme,
> to exchange the law engraved in my heart by thee
> for the smooth things (which they speak) to thy people. (1QH IV,9ff., cf. 1QH V 5,23ff.)

The conflict that caused the transition to the community of Qumran is situated in a conflict of understanding and interpreting tradition and the holy scriptures. The opponents are constantly depicted as lying and perverting interpreters. The speaker of the praise, on the other hand, is in possession of supernatural knowledge, of mysteries hidden to the enemy.

Sometimes, the narrative about conflicts between the poor seems to relate to very concrete biographical details. That's why many scholars attribute the *hôdajôt* or at least a part of it to the founder of the Qumran community, the "teacher of the righteousness".[29] Let me cite such a passage:

> I have been a snare to those who rebel,
> but healing to those of them who repent,
> prudence to the simple *(nimhᵃre leb)*
> and steadfastness to the fearful of heart.
> To traitors thou hast made of me a mockery and scorn
> but a counsel of truth and understanding to the upright of way. (II,7ff.)

Even if the "teacher of the righteousness" was the author of some of these poems, he was of course not the only user of the prayers. On the contrary, to pray according to the model of the head of the group gives a possibility of identification. We know compositions in the Old Testament with analogous problems: the so-called "confessions" of Jeremiah. Whether or not they go back to the prophet himself,

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[29] G. Jeremias, *Der Lehrer der Gerechtigkeit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963): 168ff.; P. Schulz, *Der Autoritätsanspruch des Lehrers der Gerechtigkeit in Qumran* (Meisenheim: Anton Hain, 1974). Opposite: S. Holm-Nielsen, *Hodayot. Psalms from Qumran* (Aarhus: Universitetsforlaget, 1960).

they enable his followers within the prophetic group to find an identity and to practice an attitude of piety according to this new identity.[30]

This new identity is shaped by certain characteristics. I will point out two types of speaking which are very common in the *hôdayôt*.

Firstly there are many passages of reflection.[31] Two subjects, often linked, are striking: The idea of the vanity of mankind and the idea of predestination.

> I thank thee, o Lord, for thou hast enlightened me through thy truth.
> In thy marvellous mysteries, and in thy loving kindness to a man [of vanity]
> and in the greatness of thy mercy to a perverse heart.
> Thou hast granted me knowledge . . .
>
> For thou art an eternal god;
> all thy ways are determined for ever and ever,
> and there is none other beside thee.
> And what is a man of naught and vanity,
> that he should understand thy marvellous mighty deeds? (1QH 7,26ff.; cf. 9,14ff. etc.)

The speaker is a sinner and he belongs to the realm of vanity; however, he is elected and guided by god in every detail, even in his thinking. We remember the texts already treated: The reflection following the lament pattern regularly leads to a consideration of the weakness and limitations of man. The ambivalence of God is strongly accentuated. But in these psalms of Qumran the ambiguity is balanced by a concept of secret knowledge reserved to the elect members of the community. The expression of predestination is elaborated following the traditional patterns of hymnody and confessions of confidence: On the one hand, election is a consequence of divine omnipotence, on the other, election is a subject of my personal conviction (cf. 9,29ff.).[32]

Another typical element of the *hôdajôt* consists of apocalyptic fantasies. The enemies will be annihilated in a near future.

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[30] Cf. N. Ittmann, *Die Konfessionen Jeremias. Ihre Bedeutung für die Verkündigung des Propheten* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981); F. Ahuis, *Der klagende Gerichtsprophet. Studien zur Klage in der Überlieferung von den alttestamentlichen Gerichtspropheten* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1982); K.F. Pohlmann, *Die Ferne Gottes· ·Studien zum Jeremiabuch* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1989): 27ff.

[31] G. Morawe, *Aufbau und Abgrenzung der Loblieder von Qumrân* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1960): 78ff.

[32] The importance of the predestination in the *hôdajôt*-compositions is discussed by A. Lange, *Weisheit und Prädestination* (Leiden: Brill, 1995): 195ff.

> And they, the conceivers of vanity,
> shall be the prey of terrible anguish.
> The wombs of the pit
> shall be the prey to all the works of horror.
> The foundations of the wall shall rock
> like a ship upon the face of the waters;
> the heavens shall roar
> with a noise of roaring,
> and those who dwell in the dust
> as well as those who sail the seas
> shall be appalled by the roaring of the waters.
> All their wise men
> shall be like sailors on the deeps,
> for all their wisdom shall be swallowed up
> in the midst of the howling seas . . . (1 QH III,24ff.)

The eschatological items are treated in other Qumran scriptures more extensively than in the *hôdajôt* (especially 1 QM). The occurrence of apocalyptic sketches in these psalms illustrates the connection of such ideas. This is the crucial point of our short overview.

I hope that the arrangement of the material has made unnecessary a long comment. The ambiguity of God and the precarious state of religious orientation has undergone a disambiguation. On the social level, the group of Qumran emigrated into complete isolation; table fellowship with strangers, one of the strongest expression of communication, is forbidden. On the symbolic level, disambiguation is realized in different respects: Mankind and supernatural powers are divided in two hostile groups; the unattainability of God is balanced by the conception of revelation and predestination. As a whole, private religion has developed into a subcultural group religion with strong mechanisms of control and exclusion.

2.4 *Two New Testament reminiscences: The Christ of Mt 11,28 and the Pharisee of Lk 18,11*

I will finish my outlook for conversion patterns in a post-cultic tradition with a short discussion of two texts of the New Testament. Both of them have been compared with the *hôdajôt* of Qumran. But, as far as I have seen, there has not been an internal comparison of the two texts.

> At that time Jesus spoke these words: I thank thee (exomologoumai), father, lord of heaven and earth, for hiding these things from the

> learned and wise, and revealing them to the simple. Yes, father, such was thy choice. Everything is entrusted to me by my father; and no one knows the son but the father, and no one knows the father but the son and those to whom the son may choose to reveal him. (Mt 11,28// Luk 10,21f.)
>
> The Pharisee stood up and prayed thus: I thank thee (eucharisto), o God, that I am not like the rest of men, greedy, dishonest, adulterous; or, for that matter, like this tax-gatherer. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes on all that I get. (Luk 18,11)

The first of the two texts fits well into our observation of the Qumran texts.[33] Jesus thanks for the revelation that is hidden to the out-group but revealed to the "simple"—one could replace this term with "poor", it belongs to the same category. The Christ as head of the community invites identification; the mutual knowledge of father and son is transmitted to the chosen members of this Christian community.

The second of the two texts fits well into our observations of the Qumran texts, too.[34] But the parable of the Pharisee and the tax-gatherer reflects an allo-stereotype of the converted: He thanks for not being as the rest of mankind—a typical sectarian, looked at from the outside. Christ and the Pharisee thank in an analogous manner, but in one case the thanksgiving is shared by the reporter, in the other, the thanksgiving is exposed as hypocrisy. Ask for contemporary experiences of conversion! Converted people will tell you about it with great respect, outsiders will laugh at it.

3. *Conclusions*

With the final remark of the last paragraph I have returned to the present. I will conclude with some considerations on the theoretical level I dealt with in the introduction. My study was an exercise in Comparative Religion—a discipline that normally works without giving account of the procedures in action. I think it will do no harm

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[33] Cf. U. Luz, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* (Zürich/Braunschweig: Neukirchener Benziger, 1990) 199-200.—The use of the Qumranic formula of thanksgiving in early Christianity is discussed by J.M. Robinson, "Die Hodayot-Formel in Gebet und Hymnus des Urchristentums," in: W. Eltester (Hg.), *Apopherata* (Festschrift Ernst Haenchen; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1964): 194-235.

[34] Cf. J. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV* (Garden City: Double-day, 1985): 1186.

to enter by the narrow gate of theoretical self-control. We have to consider the different levels of comparison.

1) We dealt with problems of historical connections in the strict sense such as the development of cultic institutions and procedures and the corresponding literary genres within one and the same culture.

2) In the comparison of developments in Israel and Mesopotamia we looked at some cultural drifts, not historical connections in the strict sense. We outlined the pattern of lament and hearing as a basic structure of cultic reintegration in case of marginalization. This is an abstraction, due to a comparative consideration of very different texts. However, I think it is a possible procedure: The urbanized and socially stratified cultural areas of the Ancient Near East have similar basic patterns of cultic communication that are influenced by a mutual exchange. These basic patterns are manifest in literary genres; this level corresponds to the historical processes of communication.

The development from the cultic paradigm of hearing to the post-cultic paradigm of conversion is not situated on the historical level in the strict sense, but on the level of basic structures—this is a level of reconstruction. It is a kind of "structural development" we dealt with. On this level, we found a characteristic development of a transformation pattern. The primitive pattern of social restitution develops into a pattern of self-transformation on the symbolic and social level. This development includes a change of the religious problems that are treated. The primitive transformation pattern treats problems of an individual who is excluded from a society whose values and norms are relatively stable. The developed transformation pattern deals with problems of an individual who lost faith in the mechanisms of social orientation. In our model of describing the development of the transformation pattern we have some characteristic variables: The problems to be solved by the transformation, the relationship and interaction between individual and society, the experiences of ambiguity and the strategies of disambiguation.

3) The same variables can be applied to the reconstruction of other transformation patterns; "conversions" of different types ("conversions" from one symbol system to another or "conversions" within one and the same symbol system) or "rites de passage" in traditional societies. They can be applied not only to historical but also to empirical research. It goes without saying that the societal contexts of such different conversions and "rites de passage" vary extremely.

4) In their comparative descriptions, historians of religion tend to subsume phenomena of different cultures and times under a common heading—such as "conversion". This is a problematic heritage of the phenomenology of religion. But there is no "ideal" type of conversion. So it is more promising to develop classifications of description that allow the comparative reconstruction of historically different phenomena. This was the task of this study.

CONVERSION, PIETY AND LOYALISM IN ANCIENT EGYPT

JAN ASSMANN

In those texts from the New Kingdom which we usually associate with the phenomenon called "Personal Piety", we meet with a rather emphatic rhetoric of polarity and decision. The most characteristic element of this rhetoric is a form which we may call "makarismos" (béatitude) following the terminology of Biblical and Classical scholars. It consists of opposing two antithetic attitudes towards god and giving praise to the one and woe to the other. Let me quote just one typical example:

> I will give praise to your beautiful face,
> and propitiate your Ka daily,
> for I have placed myself upon your water
> and have filled my heart with you.
>
> You are a god to whom one can appeal,
> gentle of heart towards mankind.
> Happy the man who puts you into his heart,
> woe to him who attacks you!
> Because of your wrath being so great,
> because of your plans being so efficient,
> because of your mercy being so fast.[1]

There are several dozen examples which I have collected in an earlier article.[2] We may safely assume that the form of makarismos is very typical of the general trend or movement of Personal Piety. Not all of the examples are antithetic like the one just quoted. Many consist only in a praise of the pious one without mentioning the opposite case. However, the general presupposition seems to be that there are two possible forms of a relationship between god and man,

[1] Cube statue of Ramose, see F.R. Herbin, *Histoire du Fayum de la xviii.e à la xxx.e dynastie* (thèse du III.e cycle, Sorbonne Paris 1980), 187 doc. 189. I owe this to Pascal Vernus.

[2] "Weisheit, Loyalismus und Frömmigkeit", in: E. Hornung, O. Keel (Hrsg.), *Studien zu altägyptischen Lebenslehren* (Orbis Biblicus et Orient. 28), Fribourg und Göttingen 1979, 11–72.

piety and impiety, and that a human being is in the situation of deciding which way to go, which attitude towards god to adopt, which relationship to form. Therefore, piety seems to have been conceived of as a form of relationship between man and god based on a conscious decision. Piety is not something natural, innate and inevitable such as Schleiermacher's "Kreaturgefühl" (the innate feeling of being a creature of god), but a relation which has to be consciously and conscientiously chosen and formed.

Other texts are a little more explicit concerning the antagonistic attitudes of piety and impiety. Two famous texts oppose the "silent one" and the "heated one". It seems evident that this opposition refers to the same pair as the inscription just quoted which opposed the pious one "who placed god into his heart" and the impious one "who attacks god".

> O Thot, you well that is sweet
> to a man who thirsts in the desert!
> It is sealed to him who finds words.
> It is open to the silent.
> Comes the silent, he finds the well.
> To the heated man you are hidden.[3]
>
> As for the heated man in the temple,
> he is like a tree growing indoors.
> A moment lasts its growth of shoots,
> Its end comes about in the woodshed.
> It is floated far from its place,
> the flame is its burial shroud.
>
> The truly silent, who keeps apart,
> He is like a tree grown in a meadow.
> It greens, it doubles its yield,
> it stands in front of its lord.
> Its fruit is sweet, its shade delightful,
> Its end comes in the garden.[4]

[3] Gardiner, LEM, 85f.; Caminos, LEM, 321; Lichtheim, AEL II, 114.

[4] Amenemope VI.1ff. chapter IV; Lichtheim, AEL II, 150f. I. Shirun-Grumach, "Die Lehre des Amenemope", in: O. Kaiser (Hrsg.), *TUAT III.2, Weisheitstexte II*, Gütersloh 1991, 230. Grumach; R. Anthes, in: A. Kuschke/E. Kutsch (Hg.), *Archäologie und Altes Testament* (Fs. Kurt Galling), Tübingen 1970, 9–18; G. Posener, ZÄS 99, 1973, 129 135; Sh. Israeli, "Chapter Four of the Wisdom Book of Amenemope", in: *Studies in Egyptology* (Fs. M. Lichtheim), Jerusalem 1990, I, 464–484.

Putting god into one's heart means trust in god and abstinence from heated action. The pious one gives up the heat of will and passion and adopts a quietistic attitude. It is interesting to consider this phenomenon in the context of conversion. Of course, we are not dealing here with "conversion" in the full sense of the term, such as it has been defined and phenomenologically demonstrated by Arthur Darby Nock more than 60 years ago. Conversion in the proper sense is inseparably linked to a notion of absolute and metaphysical truth that is alien to ancient Egypt. We have to wait for another thousand years until this idea of superior truth becomes socially influential, that is, until communities emerge that gather around such a truth. Conversion in the full sense of the term means to enter such a community after having recognized the superiority of its truth.

There are no communities of this kind in ancient Egypt, no doctrine or conceptual framework to adopt by "converting" to such a community and its superior truth. The only element which seems comparable to the phenomenology of conversion is the element of decision. Whether this decision for god implies certain theological or metaphysical doctrines and certain ethical principles we cannot know. However, there are certain texts that shed at least some light on the question as to what it could have meant to have made the decision or, to use the Egyptian term, to put god in one's heart and to act on the water of god.

I propose to first have a look at these texts, then to ask for the history of this concept and the conditions of its origin and development and lastly to (at least tentatively) draw some conclusions concerning our general question of the concept of person and its transformations in the ancient world.

I

An ostracon from the time of Ramses II. has preserved a literary text which reads like the confession of somebody who has made the decision for god:

> I have put yesterday and today in the hands of Amun
> and was found safe and my plans firmly established.
>
> I made for myself a beautiful remaining until my time is fulfilled,
> rendering myself over to him completely; he is my mooring post.

O what happiness is a burial, there is nothing like it.
A protector among men vanishes, his plans fail.
I gave myself to Amun and I found what is good.[5]

The content of this strange confession becomes much clearer when compared to an inscription in the tomb of a certain Zimut-Kiki at Thebes from the same time.[6] In this inscription, Kiki renders account of his decision for the goddess Mut and its economical implications.

There was a man of Southern On,
a true scribe in Thebes;
Zimut was the name his mother gave him,
called Kiki, justified.

Him his god had instructed
and made knowledgeable in his teaching;
he put him on the way of life
in order to preserve his limbs;
god had recognized him already as a child
and had assigned him food and riches.

Then he reflected upon himself
to find for himself a protector.
And he found Mut on top of the deities,
fate and fulfilment in her grasp,
life-time and breath at her disposal.
All that happens occurs upon her order.

He said: I will give her all my fortune and my income,
for I recognize her power with my eyes,
her unique efficiency.
She made my fear vanish
and gave me shelter in the moment of distress.
She came, the north-wind ahead of her,
when I called her by her name.

I am a weak one of her town,
a poor one and a pilgrim of her city.
I disposed of my possession in her favor,
in exchange for the breath of life.
No one of my household shall have a share in this,
but to her Ka shall belong everything in peace.
(. . .)

[5] Colin Campbell 4 (Glasgow D.1925.69), ed. J. Černý and A.H. Gardiner, Hieratic Ostraca, Oxford 1957, pl. 39.1; ÄHG Nr. 186; TUAT 23.

[6] Abd el Qader-Mohammad, in: ASAE 59, 1960, pl. 48ff.; J.A. Wilson, in: *JNES* 29, 187–92; ÄHG Nr. 173. Pascal Vernus, "Littérature et autobiographie. Les inscriptions de S3-Mwt surnommé *Kyky*", in: *RdE* 30, 1978, 115–146.

I did not choose for myself a protector among humans,
I did not attach myself to the mighty one.
There is no son of me that I found out
in order to arrange my burial.

The burial is in your hand alone,
you are the goddess of birth who will provide for me
with a perfect mummy when the time of dying will have come.
I have assigned to you all my possessions,
you have entered into all my property.
Therefore you may now provide for my protection from all evil
until my end has come!
Let my eyes see the rays of the female sun,
let my ears hear without deafness,
my nose breathe the air,
the way (sic) of life enter my body without interruption,
let my neck and my throat breathe,
let my mouth be efficient and my lips sharp,
let my tongue distinguish the taste,
all my members being complete and alive.

There is no claim on my body, no tongue has power over me,
no human being shall hurt me.

The text continues in the same vein for about another 50 verses but I will stop here because the argument has by now become clear. We are dealing not only with an act of conversion but also with an economical transaction. Kiki has transferred his property to the temple of Mut in exchange for a kind of insurance both for his lifetime and for his burial and mortuary cult. Another inscription in his tomb gives a copy of the official document of transaction. He calls this "making Mut his protector" or "patron" and explicitly states to have preferred Mut to a human patron and to a member of his own family. We are now in a position to better understand the first text which also speaks of rendering oneself over to Amun, mentions in this context the burial and calls Amun a mooring-post. The author of this text or rather the "I" in whose mouth the speech is put has made the same decision as Kiki did. He chose Amun as a protector to provide for his life and burial.

It seems quite evident that Kiki had deliberately chosen Mut in a situation of choice and decision. He explains his decision for Mut by hinting to an experience of salvation in times of anxiety. In another stanza he says:

My heart is filled with my mistress.
I have no fear of anyone.
I spend the night in quiet sleep,
because I have a protector.

Already some 150 years earlier we read on an ostracon:

I gave you into my heart because of your strength. [. . .]
You are my protector. Behold: my fear has vanished.[7]

These sentences were scribbled on a chip of limestone and placed before the god on the occasion of a festive procession. They seem to attest an experience similar to that of Kiki and perhaps even a similar decision which must not necessarily have implied similar economical transactions. So much is clear that in all these cases the decision refers to the choice of a protector or patron. Another example comes from a literary text of the Ramesside period:

Pilot who knows the water,
Amun, steering-oar that does not lead astray!
Who gives bread to him who has none,
who keeps alive the servant of his house.

I did not choose for myself a magistrate as protector,
I did not attach myself to a rich one,
I do not give my share to a man who was in the house of [the king].
My lord is my protector!
I know his strength.
He is a protector with powerful arm,
he alone is strong.[8]

II

Decision is a reaction. It is a step that one is forced to take when confronted with an alternative, a binary situation. In our case, this binary situation appears in a personalized form. You are summoned to make a decision for or against god. You are confronted with a will and a claim and you are free to follow or to resist this will. It is this will or claim that structures reality in a binary way. "Who is not for me is against me." The strongest analogies to this situation

[7] Cairo CG 12217 recto ed. G. Posener, in: "La piéte personelle avant l'age amarnien", *Revue d'Egyptologie* 27, 1975, 206f.
[8] Anastasi II, 9.2–10.1; Gardiner, 17f.; Caminos, 58f.; ÄHG 177.

are to found in the realm of politics. Carl Schmitt who was a fascist and an anti-semite and thus not an authority to be quoted with ease nevertheless had a point in holding that the realm of the political is structured by and based upon the distinction between friend and foe and that it is this decision which has to be recognized as the fundamentally political one. According to Schmitt, the political space is constructed by making the distinction between pro and con, friend and enemy. The rhetoric of decision is based on a politics of polarization. The claim of god to form a decision is a political claim. In claiming or at least implying the principle "Who is not for me is against me", God is acting as a politician, as a sovereign lord. With the category of decision, we are entering the realm of political theology.

This interpretation is overwhelmingly confirmed by texts dealing with the king instead of god. These texts, which belong to the Middle Kingdom and are thus much older than the New Kingdom texts of Personal Piety, prove to be the proper place of a rhetoric of decision and are to be considered without any doubt as the model of the New Kingdom concept.

In a text called the Loyalist Instruction we read (and I give only a small selection out of a wealth of similar antithetic formulations):

> He whom he favours will be a possessor of nourishment,
> but he who defies him will have nothing.[9]
>
> He who is loyal to the king will be a possessor of a tomb,
> but no tomb for him who rebels against His Majesty.[10]
>
> The king is Bastet who guards the Two lands,
> he who worships him is protected by his arm.
> He is Sakhmet to him who defies his command,
> he whom he hates will become homeless.[11]

These quotations come from a literary text and a work of propaganda, addressed to the noble families in order to win them over for the cause of the ruling dynasty. This 12th dynasty was in a peculiar situation. It was confronted with the task of liquidating the anarchy or rather "polyarchy" of the First Intermediate Period and of

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[9] Loyalist Instruction ed. G. Posener, *L'Enseignement loyaliste. Sagesse égyptienne du Moyen Empire*, Genf 1976, 22, 76–77, § 3.9–10, Papyrusfassung.

[10] Posener, a.a.O., 29–30, 92–93, § 6.3–4, Stelenfassung.

[11] Posener, a.a.O., 26–29, 90–91, § 5.11–14.

re-erecting a strongly centralized pharaonic monarchy. Feudalist structures had to be replaced by bureaucratic ones. The aristocracy saw itself placed before the decision either to enter the bureaucracy, to adopt the new-old political system and an attitude of loyal adherence to the dynasty, or to insist on its feudal power and to resist the claim for re-integration and subordination. The rulers of the 12th dynasty were weak—or clever—enough not to use force but rhetoric in building their empire. In this context, the rhetoric of decision and its semantics of polarization had a very concrete reference to social groups and historical situations.

However, the kings of the 12th dynasty were by no means the first ones to invent, use and develop this polarizing semantics. They inherited this tradition from the very system which they opposed. After the fall of the Old Kingdom, new social structures arose which can be characterized as "patron-client-relations". The break-down of the economic system of central redistribution necessitated the emergence of private enterprise on a local scale. Local lords, "big men" arose who based their claim of leadership on a clientele of adherents. This is the historical context in which the rhetoric of decision and its value-system of trust, loyalty, devotion, solidarity, obedience, protection etc. originated. For an example, let me quote some passages from the tomb inscriptions of a certain Ankhtifi of Mo'alla who appears as the most outspoken and the most characteristic figure among these big men of the FIP.

> As to everyone on whom I placed my hand,
> no misfortune ever befell him,
> Because my heart was sealed and my counsel excellent.
> But as to any fool and wretch
> who stands up in opposition,
> He receives according to what he gave.
> Woe! will be said of one who is accused by me.
> His board will take water like a boat.
> For I am a champion without peer![12]

The relation of a client to his patron is without any doubt a matter of decision. He is not born into this relation but enters it by (more or less) free choice among conflicting and rivalling claims for adherence. His motive for giving up independence and entering a

[12] Nach W. Schenkel, *Memphis, Herakleopolis, Theben—die epigraphischen Zeugnisse der 7.–11. Dynastie Ägyptens*, ÄgAbh 12, Wiesbaden 1965, 46f. Lichtheim, AEL I, 86.

relationship of dependence is need of security and provision. He who adheres and proves loyal to the right patron will be secure: "No misfortune will ever befall him" as the frequently attested formula has it.[13] From the point of view of the patron, society is divided into loyals and rebels, followers and ignorants. Their claim for adherents presents the world in a rather pessimistic light. For the ordinary people, future has only misfortune in store and it is only the patron who can provide an efficient protection against these misfortunes. This is the reason why both the inscriptions of the FIP and the didactic literature of the MK abound in descriptions of chaos. They need the concepts of danger, insecurity and chaos in order to create the political realm, the space of decision and their system of loyalistic values. In another inscription of the tomb of Ankhtifi we read:

> As to him who listened to my counsel
> no misfortune ever befell him.
> Who listened to me praised god.
> But he who did not listen to me said "Woe!"
> For I am the protector of the fearful one,
> the fortified place of him who fled from afar.
> I am a champion without peer.[14]

The text could not be more explicit as to the polarization of reality and society which forms the principle of loyalism. Fortune and misfortune of an individual depend on his decision for or against a patron, for or against obedience. He who has made the decision for the patron and proves trustworthy is on the safe side and no misfortune will befall him. But woe to him who ignores his claim; he will have reason for regret and repentance. The principle of loyalism polarizes society into friends and foes. This is so because of the non-natural character of the patron-client-relationship. The submission to a patron is not without alternatives. There are other patrons and there is the possibility to keep independence. Therefore there is room for choice and decision, for loyalty and apostasy.

Where there is room for choice and decision, there are also favorable conditions for new and more individualized concepts of the person to emerge. This is quite evident both on the level of the patrons and on the level of the clients.

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[13] W. Schenkel, "Nie kam ein Mißgeschick über mich", in: ZÄS 91, 1964, 137–38.
[14] Schenkel, a.a.O., 55.

As to the patrons, they present themselves in their tomb-inscriptions as veritable Renaissance men. These inscriptions rejoice in the newly acquired possibilities of personal initiative. For almost a millennium, pharaoh had ruled the country as the sole source of planning, decision and action and the whole staff of officials and magistrates were reduced to mere tools and implements of the royal will. Now, after the collapse of this institution of centralized initiative, people discovered their individual possibilities of organizing local systems of political and economic administration.

The pharaohs of the 12th dynasty adopted this ideology and rhetoric because they were still operating in a space where there were alternatives to the monocratic system. At the beginning of the 2nd millennium B.C.E., the historical situation was still a situation of decision. Pharaoh had to present himself to his people as the most powerful patron of all, as "the good shepherd" to use the favorite metaphor of royal ideology. The role of the patron is unfolded in a great variety of metaphors. Beside the good shepherd we find images such as the pilot, the steering oar, the father of the orphan, the husband of the widow, all of which will reappear, along with some new ones, in the discourse of personal piety. There is a very obvious line of tradition, leading from the patrons of the FIP to royal ideology and from there to the theology of Personal Piety.

The clients are even more interesting in the context of our present study. They discover and develop a system of inner virtues and values and a concept of inner self or personality which is the seat of these virtues. The patron-client-relationship requires the inner self and its virtues because of the artificial character of this relationship. In contrast to "natural" relations such as family-relations and even the traditional concept of subject-king-relationship (which was considered to be something naturally and alternativelessly given), the client enters the relationship with a patron deliberately. This leads to a new emphasis on the inner self as the agency of deliberation and decision. Moreover, the client-patron-relationship can be revoked whereas relations of kinship and pharaonic subordination count as irrevokable. This leads to the invention of loyalty or fidelity as political virtues. Where there is no possibility of apostasy, there is no point in preaching loyalty. Loyalty is very much a matter of the inner self. It is not an outward relation but an inner attachment. The Egyptian word for what we have called inner self is "heart". In striking contrast to Old Kingdom phraseology where the heart

plays no role at all, the heart becomes the central topic in the tomb-inscriptions since the Early Middle Kingdom.

> I am truly an official of great heart,
> a sweet lovable plant.
> I was no drunkard, I was not forgetful;
> I was not sluggish at my task.
> It was my heart that furthered my rank,
> it was my character that kept me in front.[15]

This new concept of the heart belongs to the discourse of the clients and not to that of the patrons. Great stress is laid on integration, subordination, "silence", self control, obedience and altruism (honesty, charity, fairness). The main evils to be resisted are greed, egotism, self-assertion, independence, violence, aggression, recklessness, passion, uncontrolled emotion, uninhibited self-indulgence. This seems clearly a reaction against the glaring individualism of the patrons such as Ankhtifi, the type of *šḫm-jb*, the "powerful-of-heart".[16]

To this discourse belongs the emergence of a new type of autobiography which M. Lichtheim aptly calls "the moral profile". A typical example can be found in one of the stelae of a certain Antef (BM 572) of which I quote some verses:

> Uniquely skillful, excellent of counsel,
> who heeds the word of those who know their speech,
> who is sent because deemed worthy,
> who gives account to the judge,
> knowing the turn of the heart's concern.
> Praised by his chiefs, known in the lord's house,
> whose heart conducts his affairs,
> who bends his arm to his superiors,
> who is beloved by the king's courtiers.
> A famed name as a knower of things,
> who follows the path without swerving,
> who hears the word in the chapel of Geb,
> privy to the secrets in the judgment hall
> the honoured chamberlain Antef son of Sent.[17]

The most explicit elaboration, however, of this concept of the heart as inner self appears on the stela of another Antef who lived some

[15] Lichtheim Ancient Egyptian Autobiographies, Chiefly of the Middle Kingdom, Freiburg 1988, 42-46.
[16] Cf. G. Fecht, *Der Vorwurf an Gott in den Mahnworten des Ipuwer*, AHAW 1972, 136f.
[17] Lichtheim Autobiographies, 107.

four or five hundred years later under Thutmosis III and who followed in his autobiography closely the model of the Middle Kingdom:

> It was my heart that induced me to do this,
> according to its instruction for me.
> It is an excellent witness for me:
> I did not violate its injunctions.
> Because I feared to transgress its orders
> I prospered exceedingly well.
> I did very well because of its instructions concerning my way of action.
> I was free of reproach because of its guidance.
> (. . .) It is a divine utterance in every body,
> blessed be he whom it has conducted on the right way of action.[18]

The heart, in this concept, appears as a moral instance, giving orders and instructions which must not be "violated" and "transgressed". The voice of the heart is not the voice of self-reliant individuality but of social and moral responsibility which already has come to be recognized as a divine voice. It comes close to our notion of conscience, Gewissen. The voice of the heart is the interiorized voice of the community. It functions as common sense, in the latin sense of *sensus communis*. It is the organ by which the individual is open to the rules of togetherness and lets him/herself be bound and built into the structure of the community.

III

Let us now return to the point from where we started, the movement of Personal Piety and the emphasis it laid on the heart and its decision for God. It seems obvious that we are dealing here with the application of the patron-client-relationship to the god-man-relationship. In the Middle Kingdom, this model had been adopted by the state in order to re-define the pharao-subject-relationship. In the New Kingdom, the same model enters the sphere of political theology and religious anthropology.

This development has a very strong parallel in the Bible and its covenant theology. The covenant theology is nothing other than the application of another political model, the lord-vassal-relationship to the religious sphere. The relationship between JHWH and His

[18] Louvre C 26: K. Sethe, *Urkunden des ägyptischen Altertums* IV, repr. Graz 1961, 974f.

people is modelled upon the relationship between an overlord such as the king of Assur and a vassal king. In Biblical religion, we are dealing with the relationship between god and a collective subject called Israel. In Egypt, we are dealing with the relation between a deity and an individual. In both cases, however, the political model is used to form a new religious relationship.

The new Egyptian concept of God as formed within the context of Personal Piety inherits the traditional roles and images of the patron. Like the patrons of the FIP and the pharaohs of the MK, God is called pilot and steering oar, father of the fatherless, husband of the widow, judge of the poor. The new ideal of the pious one, on the other hand, inherits the characteristics of the client, his virtues of humbleness, modesty, self-control and "silence" as well as his status as an orphan, a poor one, a pilgrim and a mendicant. All these are images describing the position of dependence into which the individual has placed himself. Also the situational context of the decision is similar. In the FIP we find strong descriptions of distress and disorder. In the New Kingdom we meet with problems of a more individual kind. People are turning to god in search of a shelter from fear and anxiety, guidance in a pathless and unintelligible world, protection against persecution, human injustice, malign demons and deities, dangers of all sort including the fear of Pharaoh.[19] Typical requests for salvation refer to the injustice of the judges and to calumny: "may you rescue me from the mouth of men".[20] Now not only man's inner world of passions, fears, drives and emotions but also the outer world of society and nature are considered unsteady, irrational, subject to abrupt change:

> Do not say "Today is like tomorrow".
> How will this end?
> Comes tomorrow, today has vanished,
> the deep has become the water's edge.
> Crocodiles are bared, hippopotami stranded,
> the fish crowded together.
> Jackals are sated, birds are in feast,
> the fishnets have been drained.[21]

[19] LÄ "Furcht"; "Gefährdungsbewußtsein".

[20] tBM 5656 ÄHG Nr. 190, 38–40 see p. 612 for other references. Cf. Job 5.21. Also the teaching of Amenemope promises to "save him (the disciple) from the mouth of strangers" (I.11), Lichtheim AEL II, 148.

[21] Amenemope 6.18–7.4; Lichtheim AEL II, 151.

The world has become unintelligible, uncalculable and unstable. It no longer inspires comfort and confidence. There is nothing firm and stable within and without but god, the sole resting point in a turning world. In order to find steadiness, man has to put god into the heart, as the phrase goes, and to surrender to god's leadership. This idea finds its most explicit and as it were "classical" expression in a famous passage in the teaching of Amenemope:

> Keep firm (*dns* "make heavy") your heart, steady your heart.
> Do not steer with your tongue.
> If a man's tongue is the boat's rudder,
> the Lord of All is yet its pilot.[22]

This is the point where piety differs from loyalism. No loyalist text has ever gone so far as to ask for placing the patron or the king into one's heart. The decision for a king or patron should be a matter of the inner self and not just a kind of lip-service. Now, with the transition from loyalism to piety, the idea of the heart-directed man turns into that of the god directed heart. This is what conversion means in the context of Personal Piety.

Abbreviations

AEL I, II	M. Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Literature, Berkeley, I, 1973, II, 1976
ÄHG	J. Assman, Ägyptische Hymnen und Gebete, Zürich, 1975
FIP	First Intermediate Period
LÄ	Lexikon der Ägyptologie
LEM	Late Egyptian Miscellanies
MK	Middle Kingdom
NK	New Kingdom
OK	Old Kingdom
TUAT	Otto Kaiser (ed.), Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments, Gütersloh
ZÄS	Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache

[22] Amenemope XX.3–6; Lichtheim AEL II, 158.

MAGICAL ASCESIS AND MORAL PURITY IN ANCIENT EGYPT

ROBERT MEYER

From an Egyptian psalm of the Roman Period, in which the pantheistic world-god is otherwise described in strictly anthropocentric terms of divine action and intervention, we learn of a somewhat surprising aspect of God's relationship to what would, at first glance, appear to be nothing more than the cultic offering:

> his food(-offerings) are the hearts,
> his water(-offering) is the blood,
> it is by their fragrance that his heart is made merciful.[1]

To be sure, no physical heart- or blood-offering is really meant here. What we are actually dealing with is the transposition of a religio-cultic pattern of human and divine interaction to the sphere of morality and piety or, conversely, with an interpretation of the "conduct of life" as a form of spiritual sacrifice. As early as the Middle Kingdom, Egyptian wisdom literature and other related texts define the heart as the seat of social and moral conscience, more precisely of a person's intellectually acquired capacity to differentiate between right and wrong and, accordingly, to freely choose his conduct of life.[2] Thus, the motif of the heart *almost* always carries a positive connotation and may indeed serve as a metaphor for human virtue. From the New Kingdom on, however, personal hymns and prayers reflect a new definition of the heart as the seat of piety,[3] again based

[1] The psalm is inscribed on the walls of one of the festival-chapels of Medamud, in Upper Egypt. See É. Drioton, *Rapport sur les Fouilles de Médamoud: Les Inscriptions* (Fouilles de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire [FIFAO], vol. IV, Cairo, 1927), part two, 38, line 11.

[2] For this metaphorical use of the concept "heart" in Ancient Egypt see A. Piankoff, *Le "Cœur" dans les Textes Égyptiens depuis l'Ancien jusqu'à la fin du Nouvel Empire*, Paris, (1930), 78–93; H. Brunner, "Das Herz im ägyptischen Glauben" (repr. in H. Brunner, *Das hörende Herz*, Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 80, Göttingen, 1988), 21–26; J. Assmann, "Zur Geschichte des Herzens im Alten Ägypten", in: J. Assmann (ed.), *Die Erfindung des inneren Menschen—Studien zur religiösen Anthropologie*, Gütersloh (1993), 96–106.

[3] See J. Assmann, "Zur Geschichte des Herzens", 107–111.

on the cognitive concept of free choice elaborated in classical wisdom literature, though Egyptian piety should certainly not be viewed as an alternative lifestyle, but rather as an alternative form of motivation in the ethical discourse of Ancient Egypt.

The opening verse of the above quoted passage must then refer to a secondary interpretation of morality *and* piety as spiritual offerings to God. But what is the motif of the blood in the second verse meant to stand for? An explanation for this metaphor might be sought in the use of the word *wtr/ṯrw* itself, originally the name of a red mineral used to denote the colour red and, by analogy, human blood.[4] The colour red, however, is also a common indicator of violence or aggression and, especially in the late period, for the wrathful and punishing aspect of a number of divinities.[5] In view of the fact that the following passages of our psalm explicitly describe the punishing interventions of God as a "hacking", "slaughtering" and "devouring" of the impious,[6] it seems plausible to interpret the second verse of the quoted passage as the exact opposite of the first, namely as a wrathful punishment inflicted upon the immoral and impious for their failure to offer spiritual nourishment to God.

Other late Egyptian examples reflecting a similar spiritualization of the cultic-offering situation, if one wishes to call it so, are typically found in temple-reliefs depicting the scene of the offering of Ma'at, in which the king—as the paradigmatic priest—enters into the presence of a god, invariably a local aspect of the pantheistic world-god, and lifts up a small figure of Ma'at to the face of the divinity.[7] Ma'at, this all encompassing Egyptian ideal of truth, justice and social interaction,[8] admittedly always had a cultic dimension and could there-

[4] See A. Erman and H. Grapow (eds.), *Wörterbuch der Aegyptischen Sprache* (Berlin, 1961[3]), vol. I,381 and V,386.

[5] See E. Brunner-Traut, "Farben," in: Lexikon der Ägyptologie eds. W. Helck and E. Otto), Vol. II, col. 124.

[6] See É. Drioton, *Rapport sur les Fouilles de Médamoud*, 40, lines 11–14.

[7] Cf. the examples gathered by E. Otto in: *idem, Gott und Mensch nach den ägyptischen Tempelinschriften der griechisch-römischen Zeit. Eine Untersuchung zur Phraseologie der Tempelinschriften* (Heidelberg, 1964), 24–28 and 74–75. See also H.W. Fairman, "A Scene of the Offering of Truth in the Temple of Edfu," in: Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Kairo, Volume 16 (1958), 86-92.

[8] For the general meaning of the concept see J. Assmann, *Ma'at. Gerechtigkeit und Unsterblichkeit im Alten Ägypten* (München, 1990).

fore, when used or depicted in a sacrificial context, simply designate the undifferentiated offering-situation,[9] especially when little room was available to depict the material offerings in more detail. In the Late Period, however, scenes of the Ma'at-offering begin to cover the walls of the temples with rapidly increasing frequency. By the second century B.C.E., they represent by far the commonest scene of offering, despite the fact that the traditional seat in life of Ma'at, namely wisdom literature, now hardly made any reference to this concept at all.[10] Obviously, a transformation of the Ma'at-concept must have taken place, leading away from the sphere of *social* interaction and into the sphere of *religio-cultic* interaction, though in a somewhat unusual way, as we shall presently see. The inscriptions accompanying the scenes of the offering of Ma'at in the Late Period define the ritual as a reciprocal exchange of Ma'at by the king and God, in itself nothing unusual, whereby the Ma'at coming from God merely stands as a symbol for a plentitude of divine blessings, such as a high Nile-flood and generous crops, but also social and political stability.[11]

The Ma'at offered by the king, however, has little to do with actual food-offerings, at least on the semantic level. In fact, the accompanying inscriptions describe the king less as an officiating priest than as, e.g.:

> The administrator (*sr*) of Ma'at,
> who removes the impurity from this land;
> the efficient heir of "he-who-judged-the-two-contenders" (= Thot);
> (. .) the city-eldest who isn't partial;
> the judge who doesn't accept bribes,
> who causes Ma'at to ascend (= who offers Ma'at) to him (God), from whom it came.[12]

Or similarly, in another inscription from the festival-chapel of Medamud:

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[9] See J. Assmann, *Ma'at*, 184–195.

[10] The proliferation of the Ma'at-offering-scenes in the Ptolemaic period is also noted by J. Assmann, *loc. cit.*, 226; for the almost complete) disappearance of the Ma'at-concept in the ethical discourse of the Late Period see also pp. 252–260.

[11] Cf. E. Otto, *Gott und Mensch*, 83–85.

[12] E. Chassinat, *Le Temple d'Edfou*, Mémoires Publiés par les Membres de la Mission Archéologique Française au Caire, Tome X/I,1 (Deuxième édition revue et corrigée par S. Cauville et D. Devauchelle), Le Caire (1984), 29, lines 8–9.

> The King has come, his consuming flame before him,
> [. . . .],
> expelling the impurity from your temple, day after day,
> offering you the justice (*m3ʿ.t*) that your spirit (*k3*) desires,
> repelling the injustice (*jzf.t*) that your majesty abominates (*bw.t*),
> [. . . .]
> [May recompense come from you,] Amun,
> (namely) a long lifespan upon the throne of the two lords,
> presiding over the living, eternally.[13]

The implication of these short texts, which exist in many variants, seems to be that the Ma'at being offered here merely represents a symbol of the king's (fulfilled) religious duties and that these duties basically lie in the implementation of justice, a very central aspect of traditional Egyptian kingship,[14] but also in the removal of impurity from both Egypt and the temples, which has nothing to do with tradition. In my opinion, the scenes of the offering of Ma'at are to be taken as the cultic manifestation of a fusion of temple and state, which had gradually been taking place since the 6th century B.C.E. The proliferation of these scenes in the temples of Ptolemaic date, during which the Egyptian priesthood partially filled the institutional vacuum left by the absence of indigeneous rulers, reflects the new role of the temples in the administration of Egypt—especially of Upper Egypt, for which there is only scant evidence of Greek presence on the lower and intermediate levels of civil administration.[15] The present paper is of course not interested in political theology, though some of its consequences may be relevant to our subject. Worthy of noting, for instance, is the fact that the priestly concept of purity, which traditionally legitimated the priest's entry into the temple, has now acquired some sort of social significance.[16] Conversely, the essentially wordly concept of justice has acquired some sort of ritual significance in the temple-cult.

This somehow chiastic crossing of wordly and cultic contingencies

[13] E. Drioton, *Rapport sur les Fouilles de Médamoud*, 24, Text 323 (the present translation differs slightly from that of Drioton).

[14] Cf. J. Assmann, *Ma'at*, 205–212.

[15] For the admisnistration of Egypt in the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods see A.K. Bowman, *Egypt after the Pharaos*, University of California Press (1986), 56–88.

[16] For the purity required from priests and laymen to enter the temple see R. Grieshammer, "Zum 'Sitz im Leben' des Negativen Sündenbekenntnisses", in: Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, Supplement II, Wiesbaden (1974), 19–25.

is in fact explicitly formulated in another scene of Ma'at-offering, in which a short speech of the queen, who has assumed the role of an alter ego testifying in favor of her husband, legitimates the king's offering as follows:

> Take it (i.e. the Ma'at-offering) from his (the king's) hand,
> for his heart is righteous (*jb.f-ḥ3*)
> and his priestly duty (*wnw.t.f*) is the doing of good (*jr<.t>-tp-nfr*).[17]

Where a statement concerning the purity of the entering priest might be expected, we now find a reference to his righteousness, while the expected assurance that the king's priestly duty lies in the correct performance of the rituals (*jrj-jrw* or *jrj-jḫ.t*) has also been replaced by a statement concerning his general conduct of life.

At the opposite end of the priestly conception of society that emerged from the fusion of temple and state we might also quote a line from the prologue to the demotic *Teaching of Anchscheschonqi*, in which a generalized concept of purity is at least implied:

> When Ra (i.e. the sungod) becomes angry with a land,
> he will cause purity to cease in it.[18]

In all of these texts, morality and piety have acquired a quasi ritual significance that would seem to betray a hierocratic interest in integrating the conduct of life into a priestly conception of divine reward and punishment. On a collective scale, such a conception of divine retribution had in fact already been systematized by late Egyptian prophecy as far back as the late 6th century B.C.E., when a prophetic text such as the *Oracle of the Lamb* began interpreting the repeated conquest of Egypt by foreign invaders as punishment for the numerous acts of immorality and injustice perpetrated in the past.[19] Somewhat similarly, a priestly admonition such as chapter 27 of *papyrus Jumilhac*,[20] which dates from the 2nd century B.C.E., explicitly

[17] E. Chassinat, *Le Temple d'Edfou*, 29, lines 10–11.

[18] Cf. M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature—A Book of Reading*, Volume III: *The Late Period*, Berkeley – Los Angeles – London (1980), 163, 5,4 ("sanctity").

[19] The text is published and translated by K.-Th. Zauzich, in: *Papyrus Erzherzog Rainer, Festschrift zum 100-jährigen Bestehen der Papyrussammlung der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek*, Wien (1983), 165–173. Cf. also R. Meyer, "Die eschatologische Wende des politischen Messianismus im Ägypten der Spätzeit. Historisch-kritische Bemerkungen zu einer spätägyptischen Prophetie", in: Saeculum 48/II (1997), 177–212.

[20] Published and translated by J. Vandier, *Le Papyrus Jumilhac*, Paris (1962).

links religious behaviour with a divine sanctioning of Egypt that includes protection from or punishment through hunger, disease, political disaster and foreign invasion,[21] i.e. not unlike chapter 26 of the book of *Leviticus* or even chapter 28 of the book of *Deuteronomy*. The basic difference between the *Oracle of the Lamb* and *papyrus Jumilhac* lies in the fact that the older text defines the collective guilt of Egypt in basically moral-ethical terms (as in e.g. *First Isaiah*), while the younger text regards both moral *and* cultic deviance as acts of impiousness (as e.g. *Leviticus* 19). An explanation for this discrepancy might be sought in the fact that the passage of the *Oracle of the Lamb* in which the guilt of Egypt is demonstrated[22] originally belonged to a tractate of royal legitimation that was composed on the background of ancient Egyptian scribal tradition. Where the *Oracle of the Lamb* does make one reference to the situation of cultic-offering, then only to claim that the gods could not accept their offerings on account of the injustice that prevailed in Egypt[23]—a disruption of ritual communication already encountered in classical Wisdom Literature and imprecation texts,[24] where the primacy of moral perfection over cultic exactitude is as clearly stated as in the numerous prophetic utterances to this effect found in the Old Testament since *Amos*.

The striking indifference of *papyrus Jumilhac* to the traditional separation of moral and cultic behaviour, on the other hand, must be due to the specific conception of "sin" prevalent among the Egyptian priests who authored this text—though it might be better to speak of religious offences, as the semantic range of "sin" is not fully applicable to Egypt.[25] Furthermore, *papyrus Jumilhac* also contains a list of 20 cardinal religious offences that makes no attempt at all to differentiate between purity and morality,[26] and accordingly classifies all types of offences as *bw.wt nṯr*, i.e. as "abominations of God", a term otherwise used to designate cultic taboos. More than that: The

[21] See J. Vandier, *loc. cit.*, 129–131. Cf. the slightly corrected translation by Ph. Derchain, in: "L'Auteur du Papyrus Jumilhac", Revue d'Égyptologie, Tome 41 (1990), 26–27.

[22] See K.-Th. Zauzich, *loc. cit.*, 167, Col. I, 14–24 and R. Meyer, *op. cit.*, 180.

[23] See the references in the last footnote.

[24] See the examples quoted by R. Meyer, *loc. cit.*, 181–183, as well as J. Assmann, "When justice fails", in: Journal of Egyptian Archeology 78 (1992), 154.

[25] On the problem of "sin" in Ancient Egypt, see e.g. H. Bonnet, *Sünde, in: *idem*, Reallexikon der Ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte, Berlin – New York (1971²), 759–761.

[26] See J. Vandier, Le Papyrus Jumilhac, 123–124 (Les Interdictions).

rules of purity formulated and justified by the papyrus appear to be have been imposed upon the population at large, and not merely upon the priests, while the above quoted list of 20 cardinal offenses contains taboos that have obviously transcended the temporal and spatial limitations of the cult and now possess permanent validity. The originally cultic but now evidently generalized statement that a menstruating woman is the "abomination" of God, for instance, is followed in the very same verse by the strictly moral judgment: "and (also) he who tells a lie". How then should the generalized concept of purity underlying these 20 religious offences be understood?

At this point, it is worth noting that the notion of moral purity or impurity is as unknown to the earliest Egyptians texts adressing the topic of cultic purity as it is to traditional wisdom literature. Indeed, door-inscriptions from the tomb-chapels of the Old Kingdom (since 5th dyn.), in which officiating funerary priests and eventual visitors are warned only to enter in the same state of purity as that required to enter the "temple of the Great God",[27] define cultic purity exclusively in terms of dietary taboos (*bw.t*) and bodily cleanliness (*w'b*), i.e. with respect to a transformation of the person which the sociologist Max Weber designated as "magical ascesis".[28] The admonitions found in these Old Kingdom inscriptions, furthermore, are conspicuous through the absolutness of their demands, which in fact presupposes or at least implies a foregoing imperative, as the tabuistic concept of purity, be it the purity of the funerary or of the temple-priest, requires precise and above all "categorical" conditions of entry –conditions which Max Weber classified under the rubric "magical ethics",[29] despite the fact that the rules governing magical ascesis do not actually constitute ethics in the strict sense. Webers choice of the name "magical ethics", however, should be seen in the broad context of his "sociology of religion", as it was his theory—no doubt partly inspired by Nietzsche[30]—that magical ascesis should be seen as the first link in the genealogy of ascetic

[27] See e.g. E. Edel, "Inschriften des Alten Reichs, III", in: Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung I (1953), 329 and A. Roccati, La Littérature Historique sous l'Ancien Empire, Paris (1982), 157–158.

[28] M. Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*, Vol. I, Tübingen (1988[7]), 242–245.

[29] M. Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft: Grundriss der verstehenden Soziologie*, Tübingen (1972[5]), 264–266; cf. also his remarks on the "magical" origins of religious ethics, in: *Gesammelte Aufsätze* . . ., 245–246 & 540.

[30] Whom Weber quotes in *Gesammelte Aufsätze* . . ., 241, no doubt refering to the

lifestyles, thereby leading to the logical conclusion that the genealogical ancestor of true religious ethics might be called "magical ethics". The case of Egypt could, in my opinion, serve support this theory.

Indeed, almost two thousand years later, the Greek historian and part-time anthropologist Herodotus was amazed by the highly complex religious laws regulating the daily life of the Egyptians and not only described them as the most god-fearing of all people, but also as being literally obsessed with purity.[31] His concentration on dietary rules evidently has to do with their high degree of visibility, moral purity being an inner quality that would have been largely invisible to a foreign observer. His choice of examples, however, points to an entirely new semantic dimension of purity. Thus, Herodotus tells us that the Egyptians of his time considered the Greeks—or any other foreigner for that matter—to be impure, as these sacrificed and ate animals that were sacred to the Egyptians.[32] "For this reason", he claims (II,41), "no Egyptian man or woman will kiss a Greek man, or use a knife, or a spit, or a caldron belonging to a Greek, or taste the flesh of an unblemished (i.e. legally consumable) ox that has been slaughtered with a Greek knife." Notwithstanding the obvious polemic tendency of this concept of purity, which culminates in the Egyptian designation of foreigners as *bw.t nṯrw* ("abomination of the gods")[33] and is in some ways remindful of the definition of Mosaic law in the *Letter of Aristeas* (138–142), the temptation to draw parallels to the Levitical conception of purity and impurity, notably in Lev 17–26, or even to the prologue to the Sinai-Revelation—"and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex 19,6)—remains very great. The priestly origin of the generalized rules of purity described by Herodotus is actually confirmed by a door-inscription of the ptolemaic temple of Philae[34] and by an instruction on priestly *and* lay purity from the roman-period temple of Esnah.[35] In both

Geneaology of Morals (Fr. Nietzsche, *Zur Genealogie der Moral, Erste Abhandlung: "Gut und Böse", "Gut und Schlecht"*, esp. § 7–10).

[31] Herodotus II, chapters 37 to 41.

[32] Heodotus II, 41 (concerning cows).

[33] E.g. in the Stela of Amasis (year 3); cf. E. Edel, "Amasis und Nebukadrezar II", in: Göttinger Miszellen—Beiträge zur ägyptologischen Diskussion, Heft 29 (1978), 17.

[34] See H. Junker, "Vorschriften für den Tempelkult in Philä", in: Analecta Biblica 12 (1959), 151–160.

[35] See S. Sauneron, Les Fêtes Religieuses d'Esna aux Derniers Siècles du Paganisme, Esna V, Le Caire (1962), 340–349.

cases, the local priests are warned not to allow impure things or living-beings into the sacred precinct, including several plants, animals, anyone who is dressed in wool or happens to be mourning for a dead relative, but especially uncircumsized persons, asiatics and foreigners as a whole. The Philae-text also warns against any contact with impure things, claiming that this alone would lead to impurity, i.e. not unlike levitical rationale. Admittedly, these temple-inscriptions are concerned with a particularly rigorous form of purity that might have gone beyond the demands of papyrus Jumilhac, though it would certainly be wrong to separate them completely from the generalized rules of purity observed by Herodotus, as most door-inscriptions of the late Egyptian temples addressing the topic of cultic behaviour also contain moral imperatives that can only apply to the general conduct of life.

A good example of a late temple text in which morality has been integrated into a generalized concept of purity is a well-known inscription from the temple of Edfu appended as a sort of commentary to a scene of the offering of Ma'at.[36] It is found at an exponated location, above one the gates leading from the forecourt to the first columned hall of the temple, and accordingly displays the characteristic formulary of a rite of passage, though the text was secondarily reworked into a speech of the titulary goddess of books and libraries, Seshat. It runs as follows:[37]

(Seshat speaks:)
I have come to you, O (God of) Edfu with the dappled plumage,
that I may set down in writing before you
the doer of good and the doer of evil, namely:

A. He who leads in wrongfully, he who enters when unclean,
A. he who speaks falsehood in your house;

B. He who discerns right from wrong,
B. he who is pure, he whose heart is righteous, walking in righteousness;

[36] Translated and commented by H.W. Fairman, in: "A Scene of the Offering of the Truth in the Temple of Edfu", Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Kairo 16 (1958), 86–92.

[37] The present translation and metrical arrangement takes into account the metrical study of the text by G. Fecht, in: "Die Wiedergewinnung der altägyptischen Verskunst", Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Kairo 19 (1963), 84–88.

A. He who does harm to your servants in your city;

B. He who loves (= cares for) your attendants exceedingly;

A. He who accepts bribes, he who favors the mighty to the detriment of the weak,
A. he who covets the property of your temple.

B. He who judges with the heart, taking neither bribes
B. nor the share of any man.

I write down good (= blessings) for him who does good in your city,
I reject the character of the evildoer [. . .]
[He who does good] in your [sight]
will endure for ever,
but the evildoer shall perish everlastingly.

Notwithstanding the obvious similarity of this text to Psalms 15 and 24,[38] which possibly share a common source with the Edfu-text, the formulations "doer of good" and "doer of evil" are clear indications that the Edfu-text deals with the general conduct of life and not specifically with cultic behaviour, though a few basic rules of cultic behaviour do concern everyone, for instance in the context of religious festivals or in connection with the smaller temples, in which lay priests often performed the offering-liturgy. Very basic rules of cultic behaviour were in fact already included in the wisdom-teachings of the Ramesside period[39] and these were definitely written for a very broad readership. What makes the Edfu-text truly remarkable, apart from the fact that its opening sentence—"I have come to you"—belongs to the typical phraseology of the Egyptian rite of passage, is that it has been inserted into a scene of the offering of Ma'at, which, as we have already seen, had been re-interpreted as a moral offering by the 2nd century B.C.E. at the latest. This alone suggests that the Edfu-text no longer represents an actual rite of passage, by which an entering priest might qualify himself for ritual communication with the gods, but that it has in fact been abstracted from some other context and transformed into a homiletic instruction on the general conditions of admittance to the community of those who receive divine blessings. Such a homiletic address might have taken place within the frame of a festive liturgy, as the forecourt

[38] Cf. R. Grieshammer, "Zum 'Sitz im Leben' . . .", 24.

[39] Cf. e.g. *papyrus Chester Beatty IV* (A.H. Gardiner, Hieratic Papyri in the Britisch Museum, Third series: Chester Beatty Gift, London (1935), text-volume, 37ff.) and the *Teaching of Amenemope* (I. Grumach, *Untersuchungen zur Lebenslehre des Amenemope*, Münchner Ägyptologische Studien 23, München – Berlin (1972), 5-6 and 51ff.).

of the Edfu-temple was definitely accessible to the laity during religious festivals. The placing of the instruction into the mouth of Seschat, furthermore, must be seen in the light of her intention to place good and bad forms of behaviour *in writing*, itself a reflection of an intensive process of textualization by which the late Egyptian priesthood sought to formulate a normative definition of Egyptian religion and to dictate binding religious lifestyles. Undoubtedly, the Edfu-instruction is to be understood as a fundamental religious text and should be tied in to the concept of spiritual offering encountered in the above quoted psalm from Medamud, the more so as another door-inscription, this time from the temple of Denderah, contains a maxim that seems to address precisely this sort of relationship, namely:

> To distinguish between justice (*m3ʿ.t*) and evil (*ḏw*) is the nourishment of God.[40]

Without any doubt the negative statements of the Edfu-instruction contain offences that should be classified along the same line as those mentioned by papyrus Jumilhac, i.e. as *bw.wt nṯr*, "abominations of God" or "taboos". In my opinion, the generalized concept of purity that lies at the root of this phenomenon is in fact precisely what prompted the description of Egypt as the *templum totius mundi* ("the temple of the whole world") in the Corpus Hermeticum,[41] i.e. as an exclusive religious system of *quasi* cultic character, to which only those may belong, whose lifestyles meet a number of categorical conditions. The existence of such an exclusive religious system should therefore imply that a person might conceivably be excluded from the religious community or voluntarily leave it (which would represent a case of apostasy) or even, at least theoretically, attempt to integrate himself by an act of conversion. In practice, however, the endocultural quality of late Egyptian religion will have effectively prevented a foreigner from doing so, though certain specific aspects of personal transformation in Egypt, such as the emphatic self-dedication of individuals to a divinity,[42] do exhibit typical symptoms of conversion.

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[40] Published by Auguste Mariette-Bey, Dendérah, Vol. I, 63c, col. 3.

[41] A.D. Nock & A.J. Festugière (eds.), *Corpus Hermeticum Coll. Budé*, II, Asclepius 24, 326.

[42] For a case of "self-dedication" in the New Kingdom, see P. Vernus, "Littérature et Autobiographie: Les Inscriptions de *S3-MWT* Surnommé *KYKY*", in: Revue d'Égyptologie 30 (1978), 115–146. For the Late Period see H. Thompson, "Two Demotic Self-Dedications", in: Journal of Egyptian Archeology 26 (1940), 68–78.

Half a dozen cases of religious apostasy from the first millennium B.C.E. can in fact be quoted from the Egyptian source material, though a systematic search would certainly reveal more examples. The oldest dates from about 830 B.C.E. and admittedly has to do with a specificically cultic form of apostasy, though its consequences are described as being of national relevance. It found in the so-called "Chronicle of Osorkon", in which the opponents of this high priest of Amun in Thebes, themselves members of the Theban clergy, are indicted on a charge of disloyalty to God.[43] The accusation is placed in the mouth of those Theban priests who have remained loyal to Osorkon (and of course to Amun) and now address the high priest "with one voice":

> Amun has appointed thee as the eldest son of thy progenitor;
> he has chosen thee among hundreds of thousands,
> to carry out all that his heart desires.
> Lo, we are begging thee,
> as we have heard of thy affection for him:
> Behold, he has brought thee [to us],
> that our distress might be dispelled,
> that the storm confronting us might come to an end,
> for this land is on the point of drowning,
> its laws having perished in the hands of those
> who rebelled against their lord (= Amun),
> though they were his (own) officials.
> Each scribe in his temples sought to harm his ordinances,
> which the lord of the *heden*-plant (= Thot)
> has laid down in the Book,
> wrecking the rules of the temples,
> which had fallen into plunder without knowledge of the king.

Whereupon Osorkon answers:

> Go and bring me
> all that have transgressed against him (= Amun)
> and against the writings of the ancestors.[44]

It is thus, in the 9th century B.C.E., possible for a priest to rebel against God by willfully transgressing/neglecting the ordinances set down in writing by divine scribe Thot and also to transgress the will of Amun, as confirmed by the speeches held by the priests of the

[43] See R.A. Caminos, *The Chronicle of Prince Osorkon*, Analecta Orientalia 37, Rome (1958), 42.
[44] R.A. Caminos, *loc. cit.*, 48.

same period during their formal initiation to the priesthood, in which they affirmed:

> I have not transgressed that which thy majesty (= Amun) has ordered.*

Slightly more than a century later, the Nubian king Piye came upon the brilliant idea of discrediting his political opponents by generalizing the priestly concept of apostasy and applying it to the lifestyles of his enemies, which he described in the following way on his triumphal stela:

> (The rebels,)
> They have not given Amun into their hearts,
> and choose to ignore/do not know what he has ordered;[45]

and:

> The enemies who blasphemed against God,
> they were executed as rebels.[46]

Piye himself, on the other hand, justifies himself with affirmations of his religious loyalty, claiming:

> As his (= Amun's) spirit endures,
> I can do nothing without him,
> for he is the one who commands me what to do.[47]

The priestly origin of Piye's religious loyalty is, furthermore, unmistakably expressed in a passage that might be seen as the culmination of the whole composition. When the four princes whom he has vanquished appear in front of his palace in order to submit themselves, he refuses to grant an audience to all but one of them on grounds that they are uncircumsized and have eaten fish, a behaviour described as an "abomination to the king's house",[48] thus implying that the king's is indeed "pure" and unwilling to defile himself through contact with the unclean.

Similarly, the god Seth, who was reduced to a mere allegory for the king of the Asiatics around 600 B.C.E.,[49] became the prototype

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* J.-M. Kruchten, Les Annales des Prêtres de Karnak, Leuven (1989), 63.

[45] N.-C. Grimal, *La Stèle Triomphale de Pi('nkh)y*, MIFAO 105, Le Caire (1981), 100, line 93.

[46] N.-C. Grimal, *op. cit.*, 94, line 86.

[47] N.-C. Grimal, *op. cit.*, 70, lines 67–69.

[48] N.-C. Grimal, *op. cit.*, 176, lines 150–151.

[49] Cf. H. Te Velde, *Seth, God of Confusion*, Leiden (1967), 138–151.

of the apostate who willfully transgresses the laws promulgated by the sun-god. Accordingly, he became the one who "transgresses the path (of God)" and "turns his back on the laws",[50] a phraseology also encountered in the so-called Demotic Chronicle, where the last indigeneous king's of Egypt are mostly described as rulers who "transgressed the law" or who left the "path of God" to commit *bw.wt*, "abominations"—the consequence of such behaviour being the renewed conquest of Egypt by Persians and Greeks, inflicted as a punishment by the sun-god Ra.[51] The final confirmation that this type of transgression was actually understood as aspotasy is found in the so-called Rosetta-stone of the early 2nd century B.C.E.,[52] in which the rebels against Ptolemy Epiphanes are described in the hieroglyphic text as those "who transgressed the path [. . .] of the commandments of the gods" and are therefore annihilated "in the manner, in which Ra, Horus and Isis once annihilated those who committed *sb3* against them", a term which the Greek version of the Rosetta-text translates with *apostantas*.[53]

Individual affirmations of religious loyalty to God, on the other hand, are far less easy to make out. If they do possess a common denominator, then in their phraseology, which often begins with a statement of the type: "I have come to you, god NN", accompanied by a qualifying self-presentation of the individual wishing to establish some sort of relationship with a divinity. The seat in life of this formula is to be found in the situation of cultic-offering, though its actual origin would appear to have been the funerary cult, in which the son came to the tomb of his father and performed the rites for the dead. The oldest funerary liturgies found in the Pyramid-texts, however, have already been adapted to royal purposes, but also transposed to the sphere of the gods through the transfiguration of the father-son constellation, though an example such as PT § 1683–1689 still reflects the original seat in life of the liturgy:

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[50] As formulated by the *Ritual of Felling Seth and his Followers*, see S. Schott, *Urkunden Mythologischen Inhalts* (Urk. VI), Leipzig (1929), 6, lines 5 & 11.

[51] See W. Spiegelberg, Die sogenannte Demotische Chronik des Pap. 215 der Bibliothèque Nationale zu Paris, Demotische Studien 7, Leipzig (1914).

[52] S. Quirke and C. Andrews, *The Rosetta Stone*, London (1988).

[53] S. Quirke and C. Andrews, *op. cit.*, 19, line 15 (end) of Demotic text and 26 (end) of Greek version.

Stand up for me, O my father!
Stand up for me, Osiris NN,
for I am your son, I am Horus!
I have come to you, that I may wash and purify you,
that I may cause you to live, O my father, NN.[54]

The structure of the Egyptian rite of passage is basically always the same: The speaking aloud of the name of the deceased or respectively, in the temple liturgy, of the god, followed by the self-presentation of the entering priest wishing to qualify himself for ritual communication and, finally, the statement that he has come to perform a particular task. In the temple liturgy the self-presentation consists mainly of affirmations of the type "I am the god such and such", usually a divine intermediary such as Thot, Shu, Horus, but also Isis and Nephtys, occasionally preceded by the affirmation that the entering priest is indeed pure. Where the context calls for it, these self-presentations are enlarged by eulogies or aretalogies meant to further qualify the entering priest by stressing a particular aspect of the deity in the role of which he is currently acting. Confessions of negative type (i.e. "I have not done such and such") are normally not encountered in the liturgies of the daily cult, but rather in the context of funerary literature. The best known example of what is commonly held to be the prototypical confession of passage is undoubtedly the Negative Confession found in Spell 125 of the Book of the Dead (first attested in the 18th dynasty), in which the weighing of the heart takes place before an assembly of divine judges who must decide whether the deceased is to be admitted into the ranks of the blessed or suffer total annihilation of his personal identity.[55] The structure of this spell is conspicuous, in that it is embedded into a rite of passage that actually contains two confessions: list A being of more or less cultic character, list B of essentially moral-ethical character. The impact of this Negative Confession on the study of Egyptian religion has in fact been so strong, that it has become normal to regard all later appearances of negative confession in Egyptian literature, notably in the autobiographical texts of the New Kingdom, as being more or less dependent upon spell 125 of the Book of the

[54] Published by K. Sethe, *Die Altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte*, Vol. II, Leipzig (1910), 389–392.

[55] See R.O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*, New York (1972), 29–34.

Dead. It does in fact appear plausible that the realm of the dead was not only felt to be a sphere of divine presence, in which the purity of the sacred temple-precinct was required from the individual, but also a sphere of ideal social interaction requiring certain moral-ethical conditions of entry that eventually exerted some sort of influence on the religious lifestyles described in the autobiographical texts. In his article on the seat in life of the Negative Confession, however, Reinhard Grieshammer expressed serious doubts as to the validity of this assumption that I can only subscribe and attempt to complete.[56] Indeed, spell 125 of the BD is, like all spells from the BD, not a liturgy, but a type of funerary spell that one might arguably classify as a proto-gnostic reference-text intended for use in the netherworld. It also has no forerunner in the older Coffin-Texts, which still contain a number of actually performed funerary liturgies. Additionally, a close examination of the so-called quotes from this spell in the autobiographies of the New Kingdom quickly reveals that the alledged intertextual dependence hardly exists. In Grieshammer's view, the origin of the negative type confession lies more in priestly entrance and initiation liturgies, for which he quotes a spell from the Pyramid-texts, in which a negative confession of priestly origin has been reused:[57]

§ 2083 NN has not eaten the *ḏ3js*-plant;
[NN has not . . .] on the (feast) of first of the month;
he has not slept during the night-(service);
he did not enjoy the day, while forgetting his priestly duty.

Similarly, a coffin-spell of the Middle Kingdom has reworked a cultic entrance liturgy to a funerary rite of passage into the netherworld, though the cultic origin of the base-text is still clearly recognizable. The self-presentation of the deceased wishing to enter into the realm of the dead transfigures him to a priest of the divine embalmer Anubis in the netherworld, thus legitimating his passage as the assistant of this god:

I have come as a transfigured spirit,
having healed (= purified) both my arms.
My priestly duty is in this temple
and I have come to perform my priestly service,
to enter through the gate of those,

[56] See R. Grieshammer, *op. cit.*, 20.
[57] See R. Grieshammer, *op. cit.*, 21, note 9.

who are under the direction of Anubis.
I have not eaten the rest of a sacrificial ox after the sharing
and have not repeated what I heard in the presence (of God).
I am an embalmer (under the direction) of Anubis.
I have come to conceal him, whom I found separated (= Osiris).
I am attached to his daytime-service,
that his offerings might be presented to him,
(namely) those offerings which I distribute every day.
I have not eaten the black she-donkey
and have not bathed in the waters of Nedit.[58]

Although this Coffin-texts includes more than the negative assertions that interest us here, it clearly supports the hypothesis that the original seat in life of the short negative confession quoted from the Pyramid-texts lies in priestly entrance liturgies. The same should also be true for the negative confession found in spell 125 of the Book of the Dead, at least with respect to the affirmations of cultic purity found in list A of the spell. Why certain moral-ethical considerations were included in list A and why they then dominate in list B, however, is more difficult to explain. Possibly, the gradually increasing economic autonomy of the temples, which even became cultural subsystems by the late of the New Kingdom, helped widen the scope of the priestly conception of purity as reflected by list A. List B, on the other hand, might simply represent a literary double to list A, composed by the author of spell 125 on the basis of his conception of the netherworld as a sphere of both cultic purity and moral-ethical excellence. List B of this spell is thus not necessarily an indication that a concept of moral purity existed at the time of its composition, i.e. in the 18th dynasty.

The situation only began to change in the 19th dynasty, during which several autobiographical texts adopted the formulary of the priestly rite of passage and personalized it in a manner that sometimes bears the characteristics of conversion. Thus e.g. in the tomb of Paser (TT 106):

I have come to you (i.e. Osiris), my heart filled with justice (Ma'at),
my body being empty of injustice (*jzf.t*).
Neither did I knowingly speak a lie,
nor did I ever fall into "relapse".[59]

[58] Published by A. de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts*, Vol. VII, Spell 825.
[59] Published in: K.A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions*, Vol. III, Oxford (1980), 5, lines 7–8.

Admittedly, this text is quoted from a prayer to Osiris, the god of the underworld, and may thus not be representative of actual religious attitudes or lifestyles. Another prayer from the very same Paser, however, leaves no doubt as to the validity of these positive and negative assertions in life:

> [I have come] to you (i.e. Amun-Re), my body being pure,
> and your teaching resting in my innermost self,
> for I have recognized that you are greater than the gods.
> I am (truly) one who acts on your water.
> May you (thus) grant that I spend my lifetime as a good life,
> free of any evil that might happen to me.
> May you (also) grant me the West of Thebes (= the necropolis),
> as you do for every righteous person.[60]

This prayer does not stand in a direct funerary context, but represents the emphatic statement of a man, that he has gained personal insight into the greatness of Amun-Re and has thus dedicated himself of his own free will to the teaching of his God, hoping for recompense in this life and the next. This is indeed the closest Egypt comes to an act of conversion, interestingly enough in connection with a teaching of Amun-Re, the reference to which appears in conjunction with an assertion of bodily purity, although the first prayer of Paser spoke of justice. Other texts of this type help to clarify this apparent contradiction, for instance in a prayer attested twice:

> Be greeted, king of kings,
> Osiris, ruler of eternity.
> I have come to you, my heart filled with justice (Ma'at),
> for I know that you live by it.
> I am truly a righteous man, empty of injustice,
> one whose heart has never united with evil.
> Neither did I walk on the path of transgression,
> nor did I ally myself to the braggard,
> for I know the "abomination" of my god.
> Whatever I did, it was (always) on the water of your commandment.[61]

Acting on the path or on the water of God's commandment thus means avoiding forms of behaviour that are considered to be "abom-

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[60] See K.A. Kitchen, *op. cit.*, 17 (line 15) to 18 (line 2). Cf., also J. Assmann, "Ein Gespräch im Goldhaus über Kunst", in: I. Gamer-Wallert and W. Helck (eds.), Gegengabe—Festschrift für Emma Brunner-Traut, Tübingen (1992), 50.

[61] For both versions, see J. Assmann, *Das Grab des Amenemope (TT 41)*, Theben III, Mainz (1991), 138.

inations" of God. These earliest attestations of a concept of moral purity are, in my opinion, not to be taken as references to spell 125 of the Book of the Dead, but to the teaching of Amun-Re, in which the divine commandments are to be found. I personally believe that this teaching is identical with a priestly codification of rules, compiled shortly after the Amarna Period with the intention of defining a binding religious lifestyle for the members of the Egyptian priesthood, who, in the Late Period, imposed their conduct of life on the laity. The prayers and personal confessions quoted here do not, of course, represent the prayers of professional priests. In all probability, they are to be taken as purely voluntary self-dedications to God, the character of which was strongly influenced by a teaching on the priestly conduct of life—a plausible conclusion, if one takes the fact into account that the temples of the New Kingdom held a monopoly on instruction and that most literate Egyptians of the time—be they priests or civil servants—were educated in the temples.[62] In view of the often negative structure of the personal confessions encountered in the prayers of self-dedication, it should be expected that such a teaching would contain mostly commandments of the type: "Thou shallst not do such and such thing!" Two ostraca of the late New Kingdom actually do contain such commandments,[63] as well as the passages of such contemporary wisdom-teachings that specifically address religio-cultic behaviour.[64]

Taken as a whole, these modest rests of a priestly instruction on the conduct of life correspond remarkably well to the door-inscriptions of late Egyptian temples[65] and also to a demotic papyrus in the Asmolean Museum that has preserved part of the priestly teaching,[66] which is evidently to be identified as the seat in life of the

[62] For the organisation of the educational system in the New Kingdom, cf. H. Brunner, *Altägyptische Erziehung*, Wiesbaden (1957), 17–27

[63] Translation available in H. Brunner, *Altägyptische Weisheit*, München (1988), 215–217.

[64] See the teachings of papyrus *Chester Beatty IV* and of *Amenemope* quoted above, as well as I. Grumach's reconstruction of the main source of *Amenemope*, in: I. Grumach, *Untersuchungen zur Lehre des Amenemope* . . ., Anhang, 1–3.

[65] The extant texts are, in the Chassinat edition (*Le Temple d'Edfou*, see above): III 78.10–79.4; 83.2–11; 360.12–361.5; 361,7–362.4; V 343.13–344.3; 344.5–11; VI 240; in the Mariette edition (*Dendérah*, see above): I 15c. 16a. 63 cd; in the J. de Morgan edition (*Kom Ombo I & II*, Vienne (1895 & 1909)): I 210 ab; II 878.

[66] Published and translated by R. Jasnow, "A Demotic Wisdom Papyrus in the Ashmolean Museum (P. Ashm. 1984.77 Verso)", in: Enchoria (Zeitschrift für Demotistik und Koptologie), Band 18 (1991), 43–54.

categorical imperative in Ancient Egypt. Let me therefore end this presentation with a few lines taken from the priestly instruction in Edfu:

> Do not crave for riches,
> do not accept bribes,
> do not discriminate against the weak in favour of the mighty,
> do not add to the weighing-stone or to the measuring-stick,
> nor diminish them either,
> do not cheat with the measuring-vessel
> or engage in false computations (of the grain-taxes).[67]
>
> Do not rape, do not be violent,
> do not commit acts of injustice against the people,
> be it in the countryside or in the city,
> for they were born from his eyes and created by him
> and his heart is as much saddened by the evil act
> as by the punishing of that which should not have been done.[68]

[67] *Edfou* III 360.15–361.2.
[68] *Edfou* III 361.7–362.3.

QUESTS AND VISIONARY JOURNEYS IN SASANIAN IRAN

SHAUL SHAKED

When one looks at it closely, one realizes that the Sasanian period, although it is often portrayed as a time of relative cultural stability, was full of religious uncertainty, of personal and perhaps also communal anguish over matters of faith. The literature of the period tells us of various methods used in order to achieve certainty in faith: quests, visions, and experiences triggered by drugs. One hears of cases of a sudden and spontaneous acquisition of faith, and we know of attempts to differentiate between levels of perception of the truth, presumably in order to try and safeguard the essence of the faith against people who may dilute or vulgarize it. In order to try and understand the peculiar climate of Iran and Mesopotamia during that period, and how these elements fit into the larger picture, it is necessary to have a look at some of the essential elements of the culture of the period.

Geographically we are dealing with Sasanian Iran and Mesopotamia. The latter country was in many ways part of Iran, not only because it formed a core area of the empire, but also because it had been thoroughly Iranianized through centuries of Iranian domination and extensive colonization by Iranians. At the same time it retained much of its own distinct character. By the middle of the third century C.E. these countries, which had their own traditions, those namely that continued the indigenous religions of Zoroastrianism and the somewhat nebulous vestiges of the local Babylonian tradition, had come into intensive contact with Judaism, Christianity, and a variety of Gnostic doctrines and groups. Prominent among these latter groups was the rising power of Manichaeism, for this is the area that served as the birthplace of the Manichaean religion. Of great importance were also the religions of India, more particularly Buddhism, although the Indian religions were external to the local culture. There were enough competing religious schools to create considerable confusion in the mind of a sensitive and open-minded seeker, and there may have been a lot of external and internal pressures to put in doubt the solidity of the traditional religion, Zoroastrianism.

The two other ancient great cultures of the Near East, the Egyptian and the Babylonian religions, had by this period been practically wiped out. The ancient Greek and Roman religions were on the point of extinction. Of the religions of antiquity only Judaism was clinging to life and even reformulating itself in a manner that would enable it to hold a position on the same platform as the new religions that were fighting for world dominion. Zoroastrianism was still the religion of a great empire, but its future was not assured. It could easily give way to Christianity, Manichaeism, or to one of the attempts at reforming Zoroastrianism, such as the school of Mazdak, and it seems like a miracle that Zoroastrianism survived not only through the whole of the Sasanian period but into our own times. It appears that there was a cost to be paid for this survival. This included an entrenchment into one school of thought to the exclusion of others, a relinquishing of much of the plurality of thinking, giving up part of the ability to accommodate the multi-coloured mythological and mystical trends that still existed in Sasanian Iran and that made up its great tradition.

The great innovation of the period was the possibility of individual choice in matters of religion. This is the period in which religions, with the emergence of dynamic and aggressive missionary movements for the first time in the western world, came into the market place and offered themselves for selection on the basis of competition and personal conviction. This personal faith was frequently gained by an unexpected great experience, by a sudden flash of light. Family adherence, old tribal or imperial traditions no longer carried the weight they had done for centuries before. This innovation lies at the core of our discussion, for it implies a new view of the person, and it will underlie much of the material I wish to present.

The established religions could no longer rely on the age-old continuity of tradition, but had to find a way of repulsing the inroads made by the new religions. Although we lack detailed documentation, it must be against this background that the formulation of the new tenets of faith, which breathe an air of polemic and fight against uncertainty, came into being.

The feeling expressed by some scholars that the establishment of the Sasanian empire was somehow connected with the idea of upholding a new, or renewed, faith, is probably connected with this. The first Sasanian kings, with their famous great chief priests, notably

Kirder and Tansar, felt that they had the responsibility to stand against the new religions. Judaism was perhaps less exposed to the menace of the new cults; it may have had the strength acquired through its inherent weakness, that of being a religion of an ethnic minority without missionary zeal. But the tremendous change brought about in Judaism at this period can be possibly interpreted in terms of an attempt at rising to a similar challenge. Judaism was turning, it may be recalled, from being a religion with a temple ritual into one that is centred around the law and the book, and was creating its second canon of scriptures, the Talmud.

The leaders of the Sasanian empire could have felt that the very core of their civilization was being challenged by the new cults, particularly by Christianity and Manichaeism. The violence unleashed from time to time against these two religions is proof enough of the feeling of insecurity on the part of the majority religion, and probably also of the fascination which these alternative modes of piety offered to many Zoroastrian believers.

One way through which we get to hear of these uncertainties is the literary topos that was current in the Sasanian period, the theme of the religious and philosophical quest, which was sometimes expressed in terms of scepticism as to the validity of all accepted religions.

This theme is expressed in a number of places in Pahlavi literature and in other works that go back to Sasanian models. One such text is a poem in Pahlavi in which the anonymous author speaks of his having tried different creeds and ways of life in different regions until he reached the conclusion that wisdom is the clue to spiritual satisfaction as well as to material wealth and success in life:

> For I have lived much in the world,
> much have I travelled from region to region.
> Much have I searched the sacred word of religion,
> much have I acquired of the scriptures and books.
> A religious authority have I made an interpreter,
> Consultation have I seen praised,
> A wise man (have I seen) flourishing,
> (but) never an intelligent one in distress,
> never a man of good fame in trouble,
> never a man of wisdom in need.
> An assembly have I seen of the noble,
> by speech and deliberation, by intelligence and wisdom.
> The authorities of religion have I asked:
> Is wealth best, or character, or wisdom?

> They spoke with all (their) instruction:
> The keeping of good fame is the power of wisdom.
> For wealth and treasure without number
> is preserved by character and held by wisdom.
> For man the amassing of wisdom is best
> the hoarding of a profession is most valuable.
> For (as) wealth character, and (as) adviser wisdom are best.[1]

This text is not concerned with a comparison of different religions, but discusses its subject within the tenets of the Zoroastrian religion. It places great emphasis on wisdom, interpreted as the rational deliberation of the individual, and expresses its faith that there is a correlation between wisdom and the material achievements of the person.

Similar texts of quest exist in late Zoroastrian literature. The *Dādestān ī mēnōg ī xrad* "The law of the spirit of wisdom", contains as an introduction the following phrases:

> He went forth in the world in search of wisdom, from kingdom to kingdom and from province to province, and enquired, examined and comprehended concerning the several faiths and beliefs of those people whom he considered foremost in knowledge . . . (*MX*, ed. Anklesaria, pp. 5- 6; Beg. 18–19).

Similar conventional phrases are contained in the introduction to the Zoroasrian apologetic work, *Škand gumānīg-wizār* "A trenchant resolver of doubts".[2] The theme of a journey in search of wisdom, in the course of which the traveller observes many different faiths and religions, so as to determine the truth behind the plurality of creeds, is thus firmly embedded in late Zoroastrian literature, demonstrating the need that must have been felt to display an open mind, not to argue from a position of entrenched dogmatism.

The traditional history of the scriptures as it is recounted in the Zoroastrian writings alludes to a similar concession of open-mindedness and plurality. Again and again in the history of the sacred books of the Zoroastrians, the notion is heard that due to a great calamity, notably the conquest of Iran by Alexander the Great, the Avesta (the Zoroastrian scriptures, transmitted orally) was dispersed. They needed subsequently to be collected from foreign countries, including Greece and India: an oblique admission of the fact that Greek

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[1] *PhlT* 165f.; cf. Shaked 1970:400f.; 1980:25; Tafazzoli 1972.
[2] Cf. Shaked 1984:57ff.

and Indian philosophical ideas found their way into the canon of sacred literature in Iran and became naturalized there.

Mani too, the founder of the great religion that bears his name, made use of a similar topos, when he made the point that he was aware of the true revelations that preceded him and that had been contaminated in the course of transmission. While doing so, Mani reveals himself as a man in search of the truth, reading the sacred scriptures of different religions and engaging in something like what we nowadays call Comparative Religion.

Another instance of a text of religious quest going back to the Sasanian period is an autobiographical sketch by Burzoya, the Sasanian doctor, given in the introduction to the Arabic translation of *Kalīla wa Dimna*, and presumably translated with the rest of the text from Pahlavi by Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ.[3] The author, a Zoroastrian of the Sasanian period, who got good traditional education, finds himself faced with the choice of four alternative aims for his life in the world: wealth, pleasure, fame, or the pursuit of the other world. He chooses the fourth possibility, and selects medicine as his vocation. This does not end his spiritual quest. He seeks guidance from the leaders of the different religions. Each one of them extols the merits of his own faith, and he feels that it is impossible to decide among these conflicting claims. There is a great deal of deceit in the allegations of truth offered by the authorities of the different religions. This is made clear by a fable: A band of thieves are about to break one night into the house of a man. He wakes up, and when he realizes what is taking place he resorts to a stratagem. He talks loudly to his wife, so that the thieves should hear him and believe that they are listening to an intimate conversation. He tells her that he knows a word of power which would enable anyone to get into the house from the roof without being hurt. The word is *šulim*, which could be, to my mind, the Syriac word meaning "completion, end". The thieves hear him and fall into the trap. They say the word, jump into the house through the roof, and break their necks.

There is a piece of cruel irony here: religious claims are often no more than empty words with no substance. If you are credulous enough you to take them at face value, you may hurt yourself badly. The irony may go further. The master of the house, confiding in

[3] Cf. Shaked 1984:50ff.

his wife at the dark of night, could very well be a metaphorical representation of the essence of the religious faith. It is as if one had heard a secret revelation straight from the mouth of the deity concerning the way by which it is possible to penetrate its innermost mysteries. This revelation turns out, however, to be a malicious joke, a spoof.

The next step undertaken by the author of this autobiography is to try and adopt a mode of religion which follows the traditions of the ancestors. This could be a critical allusion to the orthodox Zoroastrianism, which emphasizes its dependence on the traditions of the ancients, but could equally well fit almost any religious community in antiquity. This type of religion is dismissed by quoting a cynical analogy. What good is it to follow your father unquestioningly? If your father were a glutton, would you feel bound to follow in his footsteps and eat immoderately just because he was your father?

There is no escape from the following conclusion, according to Burzoya: the only worthwhile occupation is to do good works, works of charity. Abstention and total dedication to spiritual values is the only answer. The state of the world is described by means of a parable: A man has fled from a terrible danger and has fallen into a pit. He keeps himself from falling all the way to the bottom by hanging on to two branches that descend from above. These branches are however being constantly gnawed by two rats, one white and one black. If he lets go of the branches, or if they give way, he will fall into the gaping mouth of a dragon. His feet rest on stones behind which there are four serpents waiting to bite him. His attention is momentarily diverted from his horrifying situation by drops of honey that fall into his mouth from a beehive near by.

As a representation of the human condition, this is an unattractive view. There are dangers on all sides. The physical risks symbolize the deep spiritual insecurity of man's position: the world is a place of delusion and uncertainty. The only alleviating element in the story consists of those drops of honey that come down from above, rare and insufficient as they are. The parable seems to refer to the flashes of revelation, those sparks of spirituality, that fall to the lot of people from time to time, infrequently and irregularly, and yet, as few as they are, they are the only nourishing element, spiritually, in a hostile and menacing world. A recognition of this basic

reality, and a dedication to enhancing the little spirituality that can be found in the world, are the only means for meaningful survival.

The conclusions to be drawn from this stylized autobiography, and particularly from the final parable, do not point towards a particular religion. The composition supports asceticism and religious dedication in a general sense, above the denominational divisions. It could undermine the established religion, but there would not be many other religions that could fit this ideal. Manichaeism and Buddhism could find themselves in sympathy with it, but not necessarily with the critique of established religions which it contains. Deeply spiritual believers within Judaism, Christianity or Zoroastrianism, as well as Manichaeism, could endorse it. An echo of this sentiment was to be found also later among Muslims, which explains the great popularity of this story in the Muslim sources, thanks to which it has been preserved.

For our theme, the quest motif causes an enlightenment that enables the narrator to perceive the true path to be followed. He is transformed permanently by this revelation which to us looks like the result of intellectual deliberation and a life of trial and error. The same motif was employed in the Muslim period by other writers, the most famous case being that of al-Ghazālī (11th century C.E.), whose stylized autobiography, *Al-munqidh min al-ḍalāl*, arranged on the same principles, enjoyed wide currency. Not surprisingly, the truth that al-Ghazālī's book reaches is that the world is a place of impermanence and danger, and the recipe that it enjoins is to adopt an attitude of deep spiritual commitment. This could be derived from the same Persian prototype that might have served as a model to Ibn al-Muqaffa'.

Another towering Persian Muslim mystic of an earlier generation, al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī (9th century C.E.), wrote an autobiography which is much less schematic and more personal. A unique feature of that autobiography is the fact that it makes ample use of dreams, and what is more unusual: most of the dreams recounted are those of his wife. Still earlier, in the short sayings of another great Muslim mystic of Persian origin, Abū Yazīd al-Biṣṭāmī, written down from oral transmission, we have several examples of a similar schematic movement of life. The wild, paradoxical style of his short sayings make such autobiographical statements almost a caricature of the traditional stylized autobiography:

> For twelve years I was the blacksmith of my soul, and for five years I was the mirror of my soul. For a year I looked at both of them (= my soul and the mirror), and then I discovered a magian girdle around my waist. For twelve years I toiled in cutting it off. Then I looked again and saw that my interior had a magian girdle around it. For five years I toiled in cutting it off, and in thinking how I could cut it off. This was revealed to me. I then looked at humanity and saw that they were dead, and I said over them four times the prayer over the dead (Badawi 1949:74).

The stages of this autobiography contain allusions to various spiritual grades. The story is of course allegorical. The Zoroastrian presence in the environment of Abū Yazīd was strong, and the internal struggle against a fall from perfect Muslim devotion is formulated in terms of a fall into Zoroastrianism, symbolized by the magian girdle. The spiritual fight consists of the desire to be liberated from what had become one of the worst forms of idolatry for a Muslim mystic: self-love and self-adulation. The symbol for this complete liberation is the death of humanity around him, the complete abolition of his care for what other people would say of him.

The common denominator of these literary compositions lies not in what they tell us about their authors, but in the idea that a book recounting the maturing of a man can transform its readers. The real conversion, the actual change of personality, is not primarily what happened to the narrator, but what is expected to happen to the reader. This may be true to some extent of any *Bildungsroman*, but it is at the essence of these mystical stylized autobiographies. The drama of conversion lies beyond the book, in its target audience.

One other method widely used in the Sasanian period for gaining firm faith was an internal journey, a journey undertaken to the other world, with the aim of bringing along a vision that would allay hesitations and doubts. These were not sudden, spontaneous, or unexpected occasions, but in all cases, as far as we can ascertain, well-prepared experiences, in which the visions were deliberately sought. Here again we have a wide variety of attestations for this method of action.

The Sasanian high priest Kirdēr (3rd century C.E.) has left us some extraordinary monuments where he tells of the journey to the other world undertaken by him in order to verify the reports concerning heaven and hell. The monuments where these descriptions appear are unusual not only because of their contents and language, but also because they were not written down in manuscripts, to be trans-

mitted in the normal manner, but were placed on enormous rocks on some of the public highways of Iran.

Kirdēr makes ready for his journey, as he puts it, through good deeds of various kinds. In the course of his journey he is represented by a figure that reproduces his likeness (*xnglpy*). This figure is accompanied by a woman, probably representing his own self (an idea that in other texts is known by the term *dēn*).[4] The posthumous encounter of a man with his *alter ego*, always a female figure, is of interest in the discussion of the Zoroastrian conception of the self, but we cannot go into that in the present context. Besides this female figure there are also entities that give company to Kirdēr along his journey. These are called "deadly" persons, inhabitants of the other world. The "deadly ones" are those who recount the vision, in which he sees different scenes. The details of the itinerary and of the things seen by the traveller are not easy to understand, partly because the inscriptions are in a poor state of preservation, and partly because some of the terminology used is not familiar to us. There is apparently a cup in the throne of some of these rulers, a "pit" or a "cave" in front of another one, and scales in front of a third ruler. The fragmentary state of the inscriptions makes it difficult to understand in detail the stages of the journey. The main point of interest of the inscriptions is the doubt and anxiety felt about the hereafter. Kirdēr feels the need to achieve a vision of it through piety and good deeds, and report what he has seen, for the edification of his contemporaries and the following generations. These are deeply personal visions that serve a highly public aim.[5]

A very similar concern is expressed in the fictional *Book of Ardā Wirāz* for the urge to describe the rewards of heaven and the torments of hell. The righteous Wirāz was selected by the casting of lots at a time of great distress, which is not specified further. He was destined to undergo a virtual temporary death in order to go to the other world, to come back and tell the community what can be seen there. The lots cast are in the form of lances. Wirāz, having been selected, is mourned bitterly by his seven sisters, who are also his wives, according to Zoroastrian custom. He then takes wine with henbane and falls asleep for seven days and nights. When he wakes, with his soul coming back to his body, he tells of his journey. He

[4] Skjærvø 1983:295, who quotes previous literature.
[5] Cf. Shaked 1994:132–134.

was escorted in the other world by two deities, Srōš, the god of obedience, and Ādur, the god of fire. The journey from one division of the other world to another is done in a manner that heralds Dante's *Divina Comedia.*

Vision, as done by Kirdēr and Ardā Wirāz, was one way of communicating with the gods and obtaining direct knowledge of the things of the next world, a way of verifying the truths of religion. This was not a way open to all. It was confined to select individuals, who would have regarded themselves as representative of the community, and who would then reveal to the others what they had been privileged to witness. Even for those people this was not a trivial experience that could be undertaken casually or be easily repeated. Such journeys were rare occasions, surrounded by grave risks. The danger lay in the very fact that this was the path trodden by the dead, and that the person undertaking it was by association virtually dead, and would have to be brought back to life. Certain encounters along the way may put the power of endurance of the traveller to a difficult test.

The preparation for this journey was done, as we have seen, by administering to the officiant a dose of *mang* (hemp), mixed with wine. He would be transported to the other world; when he came back his arrival would be celebrated with a great show of joy and relief. Several of these elements show strong similarity with the complex of practices associated with shamanic cults. Such cults are nowadays typical of the fringes of the Iranian world, and it makes sense to assume that they formed also part of Iranian civilization itself, although they did not play a prominent role in the official religion of Iran.

It is striking that Pahlavi literature of the late Sasanian and early Islamic period is practically obsessed with descriptions of visions of the hereafter and of entities that belong to the invisible world. The classical example is the *Book of Ardā Wirāz,* but it is not unique. The opening chapter of the book of the Spirit of Wisdom (*Mēnōg ī Xrad*) has an almost sensual description of the figure of Wisdom. Besides, visions of the Amahraspands are alluded to quite frequently in the Pahlavi books, together with discussions of the possibility of seeing *mēnōg,* the invisible world, by the organ dedicated to this kind of vision, "the eye of the soul".[6]

[6] *čašm ī jān,* and similar expressions. For a discussion of this concept see Gnoli 1979:414; 1984:215f., where further references are given. This question comes up

The vision of *mēnōg* comes up again and again in Pahlavi literature. The theme seems to have been alive throughout the whole of the Sasanian period. It occurs as a central theme in a text which describes the history of the Zoroastrian faith (at the beginning of *Dēnkard*, Book IV), where words ascribed to Khusrau are quoted. The test and proof of a religious experience for him is the ability to see *mēnōg*. This is the supreme religious achievement. The desire to acquire a vision of the spiritual things seems to have subsided in the post-Sasanian period.

The passage to the other world entails the possibility of the soul being capable of seeing Ohrmazd and his associate spirits, the Ameša Spentas. Thus we read:

> People should learn and listen to that which (comes) from the Avesta and Zand and from that which they see with their eyes and hear with their ears. For from learning, there comes to them knowledge; and from listening, there comes to them meekness and gentleness; from knowledge and gentleness a man becomes worthy of coming to the Best Existence and Heaven (Garōdmān), and to the vision of Ohrmazd and of the Ameša Spentas.[7]

This is a notion of vision which is promised to all mankind in eschatology. A promise of such a vision is made in another text with regard to the whole creation, perhaps even within their life in this world.[8]

The souls of the righteous dead enjoy the knowledge of the secrets denied to their kinsmen on earth:

> The righteous undergo pain when they depart from *gētīg*. After they depart [from *gētīg*] until they have gone through that frightful Reckoning, they lament.[9] After the Reckoning they have joy at their station, and also at the fact that their kinsmen[10] who are in the material world,

several times in the works of Widengren (see in particular Widengren 1955, II:68; 1965:70; 1983:103f.).

[7] *Mardomān hān ī az abestāg ud zand ud hān ī pad čašm wēnēnd ud pad gōš ašnawēnd ā-šān āmōxtišn ud niyōšišn abāyēd <kardan>, ce-šān az āmōxtišn dānāgīh u-šān az niyōšišn nihādagīh ud carbīh bawēd ud az dānāgīh ud carbīh be ō wahišt ud garōdmān ud wēnišn ī ohrmazd ud amahraspandān madan arzānīgīh bawēd* (*PRiv* 36:14).

[8] *ud hamāg spēnāg mēnōg dām ī gētīg* [+]*wēnišn arz* (*PRiv* 18h:1), "the value is the vision by the whole material creation of the sacred spirit". *hamāg* seems to be misplaced. For [+]*wēnišn* Williams reads *estišn* "existence", which strikes me as unlikely.

[9] Read: *tā be widaštan ī-š pad hān <ī> škift āmār cehīdār.*

[10] Read: *hamnāfān.*

> who have not obtained the secret of the spirits and are not aware of their station, are worried (about them) in a *gētīg* manner . . .[11]

In another Pahlavi text we have the phrase:

> Their work will be this, to behold Ohrmazd, to bow (or: pray) to him and to the lords, and to do the other things which seem to themselves most pleasing.[12]

The notion of the "eye of the soul" is connected to the area of the contact between the "visible", or *gētīg*, aspect of the world, and the "invisible", or *mēnōg*. A question that comes up from time to time in the Pahlavi texts is whether it is possible to witness *mēnōg* with the power of vision, as if it were a body. This question may strike us as a contradiction in terms, for *mēnōg* is defined as that which is invisible, but it seems to be the essence of the religious experience for Zoroastrians to achieve this impossibility.

We have an early echo of the Iranian notion of a person's ability to see *mēnōg* entities in a report by Diogenes Laertius, apparently on the authority of Sotio (2nd century B.C.),[13] where it is said that the air is full of images which are visible to those who are sharp-sighted. The report is credible, as it conforms to what we can read in the Pahlavi sources; it refers to the possibility of seeing those entities, but contains a clause that restricts this vision to people with special powers.

It is possible to conclude from the texts we have quoted that there are two complementary notions of the "eye of the soul". One is mythological, and may be an ancient heritage in Iran; the other is theological, and seems to be the result of learned speculation that sought to include this idea in the framework of a theory of knowledge. The crucial point here is that this is the organ that enables one to see things of the beyond, things that are invisible to ordinary experience. The world of *mēnōg*, defined as invisible, is inaccessible to regular vision. In special circumstances, of which the mythology provides several instances, the shape and form of that world may be perceived by the "eye of the soul".

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[11] *Dd* pur. 21:2; compare Shaked 1969:207f. (which should be corrected as indicated here).

[12] *PRiv* 48:102.

[13] *Prooem.* 6–9. Cf. Windischmann 1863:286ff., where the interpretation of these visions as referring to the fravashis is perhaps too narrow. Cf. also Clemen 1920:75. The text is quoted in Bidez and Cumont 1938, II:67; discussion *op. cit.*, I:75ff.

Access to vision of *mēnōg* is never a commonplace experience, and seems to be confined, even for the privileged few who have been granted this faculty, to special, out-of-the-ordinary, situations. The journeys to the hereafter, undertaken by some individuals in the Sasanian period, are an instance of this human capacity. They are embarked upon in order to probe, at the mystic's own initiative and at some risk, the secrets hidden from the eyes of humanity. This is done either by viewing that which lies beyond the world of the dead, or by inspecting that which will come after the world of universal eschatology. The first type of vision is typical of Kirdēr and Ardā Wirāz, the second characterizes the apocalyptic seers. Much of this complex of notions is shared by Iran with other confessional groups of the Hellenistic and Byzantine world, and it seems impossible to assign priority to any of those. It is, however, typical of the peculiar Iranian heritage that deified abstract notions can assume shapes and forms and become concrete in a given situation (as happens with *xwarra*), without ever losing their abstract character. This is the quality that causes Iranian religious tradition always to hover on the borderline between sensuality and commonplace reality on the one hand, and an internal conception of the invisible on the other.

The recounting of these visions institutionalizes the process of personal transformation. Listening to these stories of transformation or reading about them communicates some of the experience, and enables others to partake of this experience indirectly, if not at first hand.

The Zoroastrians were not the only practitioners in Late Antiquity of this technique of vision of the hereafter. We have accounts of visions seen by Jews,[14] Christians,[15] and Romans.[16] The human potential for verifying the truths of the supernatural world through visions was firmly accepted, and from time to time people had recourse to it. I am leaving out of account in the present paper what is the most important transformation of the person according to Zoroastrianism: the actual death of the individual. It is a transformation because it

[14] Cf. below.

[15] Cf. Bedjan 1891:6–8, where the vision of Mihr-Narse, a Persian Christian, is given; Hoffmann 1880:11 gives just a short summary of the text. On the vision of St. Gregory in comparison to Iranian themes, see Hultgård 1982.

[16] Cf. the account of the vision of Julius Canus, at the time of the emperor Caligula, quoted in MacMullen 1975:96. For discussions of the question of the ascension of the soul in Iran from a comparative perspective, cf. Bousset 1901; Colpe 1967.

does not imply a cessation of existence, only a change from one mode to the other: it constitutes a transition period between life on earth and the life after the resurrection. During that stage of transition one encounters one's religious self.

It is noteworthy that Judaism of the same period developed its own brand of literature the essence of which was to describe how human beings can go to the upper worlds and experience a vision of what lies hidden beyond the veil that covers those worlds from ordinary human vision. The veil, incidentally, is called in Jewish literature *pargod*, a word of Persian origin, although it is not directly attested in the extant Iranian literature.

The Jewish literature which has this kind of preoccupation is known under the title of *Hekhalot*, "palaces", referring to the various heavenly abodes, or *Merkava*, "the chariot", referring to the conveyance which brings the visionary mystic to his destination. They may be regarded as a continuation, in a sense, of an earlier type of literature which was concerned with visions of the hereafter, and which formed part of the pseudepigrapha. These were the apocalypses, those compositions that were specifically devoted to descriptions of the fate of the world, of humanity in general, and not so much to visions of things existing right now in a different sphere. We shall come back to this important distinction.

The Hekhalot literature constitutes an intriguing phenomenon. Having been produced, it is believed, in the early centuries of the current era, perhaps in Palestine (but this is far from certain), it presents a kind of mysticism, sometimes allied with magic. Certain endowed individuals, more specifically some well-known figures of Tannaim such as R. ʿAqiva, R. Ishmael, and R. Nehunya ben Haqqana, were considered in this literature to have been mystics with power to ascend to heaven. They got to the abode of the angels surrounding the divine presence, and obtained a wondrous vision of the heavenly world.[17]

The contents of these somewhat bizarre and not always completely intelligible writings include a number of major themes. There is the motif of the ascension of some great mystical rabbis—Rabbi ʿAqiva is often named, but sometimes also Rabbi Ishmael—to the upper

[17] A survey of the Merkava literature will be found in Alexander 1983; Gruenwald 1980.

world. There the mystic is shown a succession of palaces arranged hierarchically, as he approaches the highest and most awesome of all, that which is closest to God. A large number of angels officiate in these palaces, and they are listed by name. A towering figure in most of these writings is Metatron, an angel who is said in some places to be "a small god", a vicegerent, or second-in-command to God himself. Some of the writings are phrased in terms that make them like guide-books to the upper heavens.[18]

Some of these writings were devoted to speculations concerning the origins of the world, known as *ma'ase berešit*, and some to abstruse theories about the powers of the letters of the alphabet. *Sefer Yeṣira*, without doubt part of the same layer of literature, though perhaps belonging to an independent circle of thinkers, speculates about the origins of the universe on the basis of the alphabet.

There are enormous risks involved in the ascent, and there are certain things that one must be very careful to avoid. This is a kind of test for the capacity of the mystic to enter the inner domain, and insofar as this is a test, knowledge of the correct behavior ensures success. In this sense the choice of the test may be relatively trivial.

A very prominent theme of these texts is the listing of names: names of angels, and the many different names of God. The power of the Hekhalot mystic, his capacity to open closed doors and to penetrate where humans are not normally supposed to go, lies in his knowledge of the arcane names. The names operate as what the text calls "seals" (*ḥotam*), which act like a pass-document, a password, to enable safe passage.

The quest undertaken by these people is a mixture of the mystical desire to know God, to come close to him and experience his nearness, with the wish to appropriate some of the force inherent in this knowledge. There is here a mystical as well as a theurgical urge, meant for acquiring magical power.[19] Both these elements coexist, although not everywhere in equal measure.[20]

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[18] E.g. the text published by Gruenwald 1968/9.

[19] A very persuasive argument in favor of regarding these two elements as coexisting, and I would add, complementing each other, is made by Schäfer 1992:150ff., mainly in argument with Scholem 1965 (who regarded the mystical element as predominant), on the one hand, and with Halperin 1988 (who tends to regard the magical element as the more important), on the other.

[20] As has been shown in detail by Schäfer 1992.

One important but intriguing figure in these writings is a mythological entity known as Sar ha-Tora, "The prince of the Torah", who holds the power to give or withhold knowledge of the Torah. This again is taken, ambiguously, to indicate the highest accomplishment of Jewish piety as well as the power that goes along with it, that of achieving extraordinary things, of acting wonders.

The practitioners of the Hekhalot mysticism are usually designated by the term *yored merkava*, which literally means "one who descends into the chariot". The expression has baffled scholars, who have tried to explain the seeming paradox of a verb meaning "to go down" being chosen for expressing a movement that we would normally perceive as an ascent. The term conveys, I believe, nothing more elaborate than "one who approaches the chariot", or "a traveller by the chariot".[21]

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[21] Scholem 1965:20 n. 1, followed by Gruenwald 1988:170ff., expresses the idea that *yored lammerkava* is like *yored lifne hatteva*, the designation of the leader in prayer (literally "the one who descends in front of the [Torah-rolls] chest"). The assumption on which this explanation is based is that the medium who enters a trance acts as a kind of public emissary. Alan F. Segal 1990:55 and n. 77 holds the opinion that the phrase denotes a posture of meditation assumed by many mystics, that of putting their head between their knees. I believe however that the term has a more commonplace explanation. The Hebrew verb "to descend" (*yarad*) often designates just a movement, a going towards, usually with a view to accomplishing something (cf. expressions such as יורדי הים, ירד לשדה, ירד לסוף דעתו). A telling phrase is על דבר ... זה ירד ר׳ עקיבא לדרוש במרכבה ואמר (Schäfer 1981, § 685) "in connection with this R. 'Aqiva set forth to discuss the Merkava, saying: ...", where again *yarad* is used in the sense of "went, went forth". Thus, when one of the texts says: לך ולמי שהוא מבקש לירד להציץ במלך וביופו וחפש נחיב זה וירד וירא ואל יפנע כי על המנילה שמחי לך וראיתיה ואחר כך ירדחה וראיתי[ה] ונסיחה ולא ניגעתה מפני ששמחי לך נחיבות המרכבה כאורה ומסלולי רקיע כשמש (Gruenwald 1968/9:358) [1], "[It is] for you and for any one who wishes to go forth and stare at the King and His beauty, and who adopted this route. He will go forth, stare, and will not be hurt, for I have put it for you on the scroll. You will look at it, and then go forth, and gaze, and will (undergo) the test, and will not be hurt. For I have made the routes of the Merkava [bright] as light, and the paths of heaven [clear] as the sun". Thus, "to go towards the Merkava" or "to travel by a Merkava" would normally be expressed by "to descend to the Merkava" according to this rather commonplace usage. *Yorede merkava*, an abbreviation of *hayyoredim lammerkava*, actually means "those who travel by the Merkava". For the authors of the Hekhalot literature there was nothing paradoxical in this usage, since for them *yarad* did not mean "to descend", but simply: "to go forth".

A further point may however be made. Merkava designates not only a chariot, but probably any kind of conveyance, including a boat. In Arabic *markab* is the normal word for a boat, and in Mandaic, at least in one instance, one can show that the same word was used for "boat" (cf. Mand. מארכאבאתא, pl., in Greenfield 1981:24, where it should be translated "ships" rather than "chariots". "To travel

The most potent technique used by the Hekhalot practitioners for achieving their aim, and at the same time the very goal of the endeavour, was vision. It was both a way of witnessing the mysteries, and, in a typical ambiguity, also the confirmation, the seal of the highest achievement. Vision has an old and venerable tradition in Jewish literature. Some of the oldest visions recorded in Jewish literature are connected with Abraham (the Covenant of the Pieces, Gen 15); with Jacob (the vision of the angelic ladder), with Moses (the vision of the burning bush), and with the prophets. The foremost among the prophetic visions is that of Ezekiel, with his description of the heavenly chariot (Ez 1),[22] a vision that exercised enormous influence on subsequent literature of the visionary genre. Ezekiel's vision is pivotal, serving as it does both as part of the old prophetic tradition, and as the beginning of the new style of vision. The main difference between the two types of vision, prophetic and mystical, may be summarized by the following observations. The former is spontaneous and involuntary, while the latter is something that the mystic works for, prepares for, and tries to induce by various techniques, although we are not entirely familiar with their details. The Hekhalot vision, as a result, is not an isolated, one-time occurrence, but a structured and planned itinerary, for which the writings serve as charts and guide books. The visions of the apocryphal authors and of Paul may be viewed as intermediary between the two.

The contents of the visions that developed in the Jewish tradition are quite varied. In contrast to the prophetic literature, however, we have here a gradation, a structured progress along the journey, and an extended narrative. This is no longer a one-time occurrence, of limited duration, but a whole itinerary.

We lack evidence for the tensions and polemics that may have surrounded the Hekhalot theurgists and their activities. Only scant and uncertain references have been detected in the Talmudic literature to the Hekhalot mystics. It seems reasonable to suppose that they could not have been ignored by the leaders of official Judaism. Some rabbis may themselves have been members of these groups, while others may have regarded this endeavour with suspicion and

by chariot" was expressed by a phrase that may have been influenced by nautical usage as in יורדי הים.

[22] See Kingsley 1992 for a demonstration that this vision must have been inspired by a Babylonian prototype.

misgivings. The reason why so little information is extant about them must be sought in their small numbers and in their secrecy, for esotericism was definitely part of the mores of these groups.

One reason for the use of pseudepigraphy may well have been the notion that mystic visions should be kept private. The idea of supernatural visions and journeys outside the sensual world was deemed to be strictly part of the esoteric tradition. It was not to be spoken of in public. The paradox of esotericism is that it is under tremendous pressure to come out, otherwise there would be no need to impose secrecy. A common way of avoiding violating the convention of secrecy in the world of Late Antiquity was by using pseudepigraphy, by attributing the experience to great figures of the past.[23]

The first, and perhaps the only, break with the rule of pseudepigraphy is represented by the vision of Paul, recounted under his own name, with no disguise. Even in the Zohar, at a much later date, the tradition of anonymity continues, the author disguises his identity behind the mask of pseudepigraphy.

There are several powerful symbols and images that come up in the Hekhalot literature, and some of them have counterparts and parallels in other types of magical literature. Among these water is perhaps the most striking.

One scene that comes up in various forms is the way by which the candidate for ascent has to undergo an extremely risky test at the entrance to the sixth "palace" or heaven. Water is poured on him, or hurled at him, but the water has no reality: it is in effect something like beams of light. If he asks: "What is this water?", or merely exclaims: "Water, water!", he is exposed as a fake seeker for ascent, and suffers a terrible fate. A different text describes the great danger of the Sixth Palace as consisting of fire.[24]

The danger involved is a test to which the adept is submitted, though its nature and meaning are debated. One interpretation of the water episode offered regards it as a test that may show whether the candidate tends to form false religious opinions, which is akin to idol worship. Another theory is that the test exposes the difference between an improper candidate and one who is worthy. Whoever identifies water, the symbol of chaos before creation, as a principle, is unworthy, while a worthy candidate knows the greatness of God.

[23] This suggestion is made by A.F. Segal 1990:58.
[24] In the text published by Gruenwald 1968/9.

Another scholar suggested that the search for knowledge is perceived as a sin. This would be the sense of the trial to which the candidate is submitted. It would make the fault of the wrong novice akin to that of Prometheus. Several scholars have emphasized the significance of water in various magic rituals, especially the type of ritual in which a medium is supposed to see hidden things on the surface of water, or of water with oil. That water is not a casual element, it may be recalled that visions of the prophets, including Ezekiel, and those of the apocrypha were often experienced near bodies of water.

Another aspect of this scene consists in the observation that it is part of a more general injunction not to utter a word in the course of the experience, to endure the scary vision without reacting. The warning not to show fear occurs often in these texts as well as in the magic literature. The trial with water has its counterpart in the popular Jewish tradition in the facetious episode of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. According to a legend, King Solomon creates a solid surface that looks like water. The Queen of Sheba falls into the trap: when she tries to walk over this surface she lifts the hem of her skirt, thus exposing her legs. In this way she formally fails the test, but her failure is in fact a success.[25]

In the Hekhalot literature the deception with water constitutes a powerful challenge to the power of the individual to keep his experience to himself, not to be shaken, and not to communicate with others. Few can stand it.

The scenes described in certain other passages of the Hekhalot literature seem to speak not of a test, but of a hardship, which has to be endured. The hardship consists in terrible flames of fire. This is also a kind of test. It is not a test of character or of intelligence, but of endurance. In this sense one cannot simply equate water and fire as two alternative tests. Only water serves as test, fire serves to frighten and cajole. The danger of the sixth palace is presented in two variant forms: either as a test of the adept's ability to keep silent, or as a test of his ability to withstand fear of fire and of the vicious angelic attendants. If he cannot endure these hardships, he falls a prey and loses his standing.

The achievement of these journeys and visions consists of a feeling of beatitude and ecstasy at seeing sublime things that are hidden

[25] Dan 1987:199 and n. 15 has drawn attention to this analogy; he refers to Yasif 1985:50–60 for discussions of the Queen of Sheba legend.

from the eyes of most, coupled with harsh and cruel tests. At the outcome there emerges a person purified through terror and divine sweetness, a person who has undergone profound change.

We have no specific knowledge as to where the Hekhalot texts originated. Babylonia cannot be excluded, in particular since there could have been a continuity of visionary tradition there. There is in fact some evidence of Hekhalot writings written in Babylonia, most recently in newly-discovered Aramaic magic bowls.[26]

What do we learn from this rather cursory comparison of the phenomena of Judaism and Zoroastrianism? The forms and symbols are different, and it is difficult to claim direct dependence, and yet there are certain elements that suggest that they belong to the same cultural orbit. Among these is the effort to tear the veil of hidden things, and the belief that it is possible to achieve this through visions as a vehicle of experience. The technique involves a journey with a gradual advance through various stages, in the course of which princes and rulers of the different domains of the upper world are encountered.

We should perhaps spell out some of the differences, which are of equal importance. While both cultures share a strong faith in eschatological events, this is crucial for the Iranian visions, not for the Jewish ones. In the Hekhalot texts eschatology is largely ignored. The main emphasis seems to be, in a proper mystical spirit, on the here and now. It may be said that the Jewish mystical visions are a sort of imminent or internal experience, with eschatology neutralized.

Secrecy is another point on which there is great difference between the Iranian visions and the Jewish ones. While the Hekhalot texts are imbued with the idea of esoteric knowledge that is imparted to very few people, the extant Iranian texts are almost entirely public. This does not mean to say that there was no esoteric element in Zoroastrianism. But the visionary texts seem to be at the opposite pole of esotericism. The fact that the vision of the High Priest Kirdēr was placed in four versions on the highways of the empire, on lofty rocks, for everyone to see (if not to read), proves that there was no sense of secrecy about the vision. Quite on the contrary: the very idea of the vision of Kirdēr, like that of Ardā Wirāz, was to pro-

[26] In the text published by Gruenwald 1968/9 there occurs an allusion to someone "in the house of the Rabbi in Babylonia". Cf. Shaked 1995 for a fragment of a Hekhalot text found in an Aramaic incantation bowl from Mesopotamia.

claim to the world that the other world exists, and that faith in it should be proclaimed.

The Hekhalot literature could have been formulated partly in Babylonia, but it shows little evidence of direct contact with Iran. What it does show is that the Jews had very much the same concerns and tastes as their neighbours, in particular the conception of religious experience that is achieved through preparation, vision, and severe tests that bring about a transformation of the person.

By taking drugs under certain controlled conditions; by seeing visions; by watching the spiritual entities, that cannot otherwise be seen, with the "eye of the soul"; by recounting the story of a person's transformation through a life trajectory that leads through different types of religion—by all these means the culture of the Sasanian period made available a whole range of techniques for changing the person.

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DIE URCHRISTLICHE TAUFE UND DIE SOZIALE KONSTRUKTION DES NEUEN MENSCHEN

GERD THEISSEN

Die Herkunft von Riten verliert sich meist im Dunkel der Vergangenheit. Fragt man nach ihrer Entstehung, so erhält man die Antwort: Sie wurden seit je her praktiziert. Anders im Urchristentum. Taufe und Abendmahl wurden auf "zeitgenössische" Gestalten zurückgeführt, die Taufe auf Johannes, das Abendmahl auf Jesus. Sie waren etwas Neues. Wir können noch heute die Entstehung dieser neuen Riten verfolgen. Sie entstehen und wandeln sich "vor unseren Augen". Das ist in der Religionsgeschichte ein seltener Fall und macht ihr Studium so interessant, auch wenn die Textüberlieferung fragmentarisch und mehrdeutig ist.

Im ersten Teil sollen Entstehung und Wandel der Taufe mit einem Strukturwandel der Religion in Zusammenhang gebracht werden. Die Ausdifferenzierung des Urchristentums aus dem Judentum brachte eine neue Religion hervor, die sich strukturell von ihrer Mutterreligion unterschied. Bei der Analyse dieses Strukturwandels legen wir drei Religionstypologien zugrunde: die Unterscheidung von offizieller und subkultureller Religion, von Versöhnungs- und Erlösungsreligion, von Volks- und Universalreligion. Rituale spielen bei diesem Wandel eine wichtige Rolle, besonders die Taufe, die eine Wandlung des Menschen und die Entstehung einer neuen Gemeinschaft symbolisiert.

In einem zweiten Teil skizzieren wir die Entstehung der Taufe. Sie entstand in drei Stadien aus den Waschungen des Judentums. Diese drei Stadien werden repräsentiert durch die Vervollkommnungsriten der essenischen Waschungen, durch den einmaligen Umkehrritus des Täufers und den Wiedergeburtsritus des Urchristentums. Jedes Stadium erhellt einen Aspekt des allgemeinen religiösen Strukturwandels, der zum Christentum als einer Religion mit subkulturellen, erlösungsorientierten und universalen Zügen führte.

Ein dritter Teil soll klären, wie sich mit Hilfe des neuen Wiedergeburtsritus die soziale Konstruktion des neuen Menschen vollzog. Dabei interessiert besonders, inwiefern Grundstrukturen der jüdischen Mutterreligion im Urchristentum erhalten blieben. Wir finden in ihm

als Erbe des Judentums Züge einer allgemein-kulturellen, versöhnungsorientierten Volksreligion. Strukturelemente verschiedener Religionstypen gehören zu ihm. Gerade als einer dynamischen Bewegung in einer Übergangssituation findet das Urchristentum in der Taufe—einem "Übergangsritus"—seinen charakteristischen Ausdruck.

I. *Wandlungen des Ritus und Wandlungen der Religion*

Ritualen wurde lange Zeit eine konservative und sozial stabilisierende Funktion zugeschrieben. Sie leben von der Wiederholung dessen, was seit je her tradiert wurde, und sie helfen, die traditionelle Form des Lebens aufrecht zu erhalten, indem sie in Krisensituationen den einzelnen stabilisieren und die Solidarität der Gemeinschaft erneuern. Zweifellos gilt dies für viele Rituale—nicht nur in traditionalen Stammesgesellschaften, sondern auch in hochdifferenzierten Industriegesellschaften. Aber damit ist nicht alles gesagt. V. Turners Theorie des Rituals hat eine neue Sicht ermöglicht:[1] Rituale haben eine transformative Kraft. Sie ermöglichen es Menschen, sich aus festgelegten Rollen und Strukturen der Gesellschaft zu lösen. Sie führen sie in ein "Schwellendasein", wo die alten Lebensstrukturen ihre determinierende Macht verloren haben, die neuen aber noch nicht verfestigt sind. In dieser liminalen Phase vermitteln sie neue soziale Erfahrungen, die eine "Antistruktur" zum Leben der Gesellschaft, der societas, darstellen: die Erfahrung der communitas, einer informellen Gemeinschaft, in der die traditionellen Rollen verblassen. Für dieses Schwellen-

[1] A.v. Gennep, *Les rites de passage. Étude systématique des Rites* (Paris: Librairie Critique Emile Nourry, 1909) hat in seiner klassischen Analyse eher die stabilisierende Funktion der rituellen Bewältigung von Statuswechsel betont. Er unterschied bei den "rites de passage" drei Phasen: eine Trennungsphase, eine Schwellenphase und eine Wiedereingliederungsphase. V. Turner, *The Ritual Process. Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Comp., 1969) konzentrierte seine Untersuchungen vor allem auf die Schwellenphase: In ihr fand er einen Widerspruch zum normalen Leben der societas mit ihren Hierarchien und Statuszuweisungen. Ihrer "Struktur" wird eine "Anti-Struktur" entgegengesetzt, der societas eine communitas mit egalitären Tendenzen und der Ordnung des normalen Lebens ein "Antinomismus". Entsprechend wird den Ritualen nicht nur stabilisierende Funktion, sondern eine transformative Kraft zugesprochen, die in die Gesellschaft verändernd einwirken kann. Eine ausgezeichnete Analyse urchristlicher Rituale und Symbole mit Hilfe der Ritualtheorie V. Turners bietet: Ch. Strecker, *Transformation, Liminalität und Communitas bei Paulus. Kulturanthropologische Zugänge zur paulinischen Theologie* (Diss. Augustana-Hochschule Neuendettelsau, 1995, erscheint in: FRLANT, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, ca. 1999).

dasein gilt: "Hier ist nicht Jude noch Grieche, hier ist nicht Sklave noch Freier, hier ist nicht Mann noch Frau" (Gal 3:28). Nach dieser Phase kommt es zum Aufbau neuer Strukturen, die verändernd in die Gesellschaft hineinwirken können. Die rituelle Erfahrung des Verlassens und Aufbrechens aus der Alltagswelt wird in einigen religiösen Bewegungen zu einer sozial kreativen Macht. Und umgekehrt: Religiöse Erneuerungsbewegungen bedienen sich der Ritualisierung von Übergängen und Wandlungen im Leben, um diese Erfahrung für eine Erneuerung des Lebens fruchtbar zu machen. Das gilt auch für das Urchristentum: Es ist eine religiöse Erneuerungsbewegung. Eines ihrer wichtigsten Rituale symbolisiert Erneuerung und Verwandlung und ist zugleich Ergebnis eines Wandels in der Geschichte der Riten.

Die Taufe hat Vorläufer in den Waschungen des Alten Testaments und des Judentums. Aber sie unterscheidet sich von diesen Vorläufern in drei Punkten:[2]

Waschungen sind in der Regel Wiederherstellungsriten. Sie erneuern verlorengegangene Kultfähigkeit. Daher werden sie nach jeder Verunreinigung wiederholt.[3] Die Taufe will dagegen weniger einen alten Zustand wiederherstellen, als einen neuen herbeiführen: Sie will den neuen Menschen verwirklichen, und das durch einen einmaligen und irreversiblen Akt, hinter den es im Grunde kein Zurück mehr gibt. Waschungen wiederholen sich. Die Taufe ist ein *einmaliges* Transformationsritual.

Ein zweiter Unterschied liegt darin, daß die meisten Waschungen Vorbereitungsriten sind, denen ein anderer Ritus folgt. Sie ermöglichen es, das Heiligtum zu betreten, sind aber nicht das entscheidende Ritual im Heiligtum selbst.[4] Im Urchristentum wird aus vorbereitenden Waschungen ein zentraler Akt im Leben eines Menschen,

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[2] Vgl. zur Entstehung der Taufe: G. Barth, *Die Taufe in frühchristlicher Zeit* (Biblisch-Theologische Studien 4, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981), 29–43.

[3] Unrein ist alles, was vom Kult ausschließt und z.B. ein Betreten des Tempels unmöglich macht. Unreinheit kann verbunden sein mit bestimmten Speisen, Berührungen, Ausscheidungen, Aussatz—und schließlich durch Kontakt mit dem, was Unreinheit und Sünde beseitigen kann: mit dem Sündenbock (Lev 16:26) und dem Reinigungswasser (Num 19:21). Als unrein wird definiert, was Ordnung und Leben bedroht, einerseits, was aus wichtigen Klassifikationsschemata herausfällt (wie das Schwein, das zwar gespaltene Klauen hat, aber kein Wiederkäuer ist; vgl. Lev 11:7), andererseits, was wie Spermata, Menstruationsblut und tote Körper Grenzen des Lebens anzeigt. Vgl. M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger. An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London u.a.: Routledge, 1966) = *Reinheit und Gefährdung. Eine Studie zu Vorstellungen von Verunreinigung und Tabu* (Berlin: Reimer, 1985).

[4] Als Beispiel seien jüdische Reinigungsriten vor Festtagen genannt (2 Chr 30:15–16;

der nur einmal vollzogen wird. In ihm vollzieht sich etwas *Endgültiges* (weswegen die Taufe mit eschatologischen Motiven gedeutet werden kann).[5]

Ein dritter Unterschied ergibt sich aus dieser intensiven Aufladung traditioneller Waschungen mit neuem Sinn. Waschungen veranschaulichen sinnfällig, was sie bewirken und darstellen: die Befreiung von Unreinheit und Schmutz. Der äußere Vollzug steht in einer ikonischen Beziehung zu seiner eigentlichen Bedeutung. Die Taufe aber gilt schon bald im Urchristentum als Mitbegrabenwerden mit Christus und als geistliche Beschneidung.[6] Durch solche Deutungen gerät der äußere Vollzug in eine *anikonische* Beziehung zum religiösen Sinn. Dem entspricht, daß man unter bestimmten Umständen den äußeren Ritus reduzieren kann—auf drei Besprengungen, die ein umfassenderes Bad ersetzen (Did. 7:3).

Änderungen von Riten—hier die Entstehung eines einmaligen, endgültigen und anikonischen Transformationsrituals—weisen auf Änderungen in der ganzen Religion. Mit der Taufe ist die Herausdifferenzierung des Urchristentums aus dem Judentum verbunden. Bis heute ist umstritten, ob und inwiefern sich mit dieser Herauslösung ein Wandel der Religionsstruktur vollzogen hat. Im folgenden seien versuchsweise drei Typologien von Religionen zur Deutung herangezogen.

Eine erste Typologie unterscheidet zwischen einer *offiziellen* und *subkulturellen Religion.* Schon in den altorientalischen Religionen finden wir einen internen Religionspluralismus: eine verschiedene Ausprägung des offiziellen Staatskultes und eine davon unterschiedene familiäre Frömmigkeit.[7] Mit zunehmender Differenzierung in der Gesellschaft entstehen in der antiken Welt neben der offiziellen Religion der Polis und des Staates auf der einen und der familiären Frömmigkeit des Oikos auf der anderen Seite private Kultgemeinschaften, in die man nicht hineingeboren wird, sondern in die man durch Entschluß ein-

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John 11:55), die der eigentlichen Initiation vorhergehende Waschung bei der Isisweihe (Apuleius, Met. XI,23:1f.) und das Bad im Meer, das alle Initianden drei Tage vor der Prozession nach Eleusis nahmen. Vgl. G.F. Mylonas, *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries* (Princeton: University Press, 1961), 224–285.

[5] Eindeutig etwa in Col 2:12: "Mit ihm seid ihr begraben worden durch die Taufe; mit ihm seid ihr auch auferstanden durch den Glauben. . . ."

[6] Zur Taufe als Begräbnis vgl. Rom 6:4; Col 2:12; als geistliche Beschneidung vgl. Col 2:11.

[7] Vgl. R. Albertz, *Persönliche Frömmigkeit und offizielle Religion. Religionsinterner Pluralismus in Israel und Babylon* (Calwer Theologische Monographien A9, Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1978).

tritt: Solche subkulturellen Kulte sind in der paganen Kultur die Mysterienreligionen,[8] in der jüdischen Kultur die Sondergruppen der Essener und Therapeuten.[9] Taufe und Waschungen können rituell den Übergang von der allgemein-kulturellen Religion zur subkulturellen Minderheitsreligion symbolisieren—wobei beide in vielen Fällen vereinbar bleiben: Weder die Angehörigen eines antiken Mysterienkults noch die Mitglieder des essenischen Bundes verließen die allgemeine Symbolwelt der "offiziellen Religion". Manchmal aber bedeutet der Übergang von der societas zur subkulturellen communitas einen Abbruch mit den bisherigen Bindungen: so beim Eintritt ins Judentum und Urchristentum.[10]

Eine zweite Typologie ist die von Versöhnungs- und Erlösungsreligion.[11] Typische Versöhnungsreligionen sind danach die Stammesreligionen: Hier geht es um die Herstellung von Friedens- und Kooperationsfähigkeit in der Welt. Eine typische Erlösungsreligion wäre dagegen der Buddhismus: Hier wird der Einzelne aus einer negativ bewerteten Welt herausgelöst, um radikal frei von ihr zu werden. Die beiden entscheidenden Kriterien sind also die Einstellung zur Gemeinschaft und zur Welt. Dort, wo sich eine intensive Gemeinschaftsreligiosität mit einer negativen Einstellung zur Welt verbindet, befinden wir uns nach dieser Religionstypologie auf der Grenze zwischen Versöhnungs- und Erlösungsreligion. Auch das Urchristentum wäre hier anzusiedeln, wobei in einigen Teilen (wie in den synoptischen Evangelien und bei Paulus) versöhnungsreligiöse Züge stärker dominieren, in anderen dagegen erlösungsreligiöse Tendenzen (so in den joh Schriften). Auch der Übergang zwischen einer Versöhnungs- und einer Erlösungsreligion kann rituell symbolisiert werden: Schon bei

[8] Vgl. H.J. Klauck, *Die religiöse Umwelt des Urchristentums I. Stadt- und Hausreligion, Mysterienkulte, Volksglaube* (Kohlhammer Studienbücher Theologie 9,1, Stuttgart/Berlin/Köln: Kohlhammer, 1995), 77–128. W. Burkert, *Antike Mysterien. Funktionen und Gehalt* (München: C.H. Beck, 1990): "Mysterien sind eine Form 'persönlicher Religion', die eine private Entscheidung voraussetzt und durch Beziehung zum Göttlichen eine Art von 'Erlösung' sucht." (p. 19).

[9] Vgl. H. Stegemann, *Die Essener, Qumran, Johannes der Täufer und Jesus. Ein Sachbuch* (Herder spektrum 4128, Freiburg/Basel/Wien: Herder, 1993).

[10] So die klassische These von A.D. Nock, *Conversion. The Old and the New Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933): Neben Juden und Christen weist er auch für philosophische Schulen echte "Konversionen" nach, d.h. einen Wechsel des Überzeugungssystems mit einem Bruch gegenüber dem verlassenen Überzeugungssystem.

[11] Th. Sundermeier, "Erlösung oder Versöhnung? Religionswissenschaftliche Anstöße," *Evangelische Theologie* 53 (1993): 124–146.

Johannes dem Täufer ist die Taufe zu einem "eschatologischen Sakrament" geworden, d.h. sie ermöglicht den Eintritt in eine neue Welt, die bald erwartet wird. Der Täufer steht dabei in der Tradition apokalyptischer Erwartungen, durch die in das antike Judentum ein erlösungsreligiöser Zug hineingekommen war, der im Urchristentum in eigentümlicher Weise abgewandelt wird. Immer aber ist, bei Johannes wie bei den Christen, die Taufe "Erlösung" aus einer alten Welt—und zugleich Grundlage einer "Versöhnung" mit anderen Menschen in der Gemeinschaft der Getauften.

Schließlich ist als dritte Typologie die Unterscheidung von Volks- und Universalreligion zu nennen, d.h. zwischen solchen Religionen, die an ein Volk gebunden sind und darüber hinaus kaum Anhänger gewinnen, und solchen Religionen (wie Buddhismus und Christentum), die missionierend über die Grenzen ihrer Ursprungsvölker hinaus wirken. G. Mensching, auf den diese Typologie zurückgeht,[12] schrieb beiden Religionstypen ein verschiedenes Heilsverständnis zu: In Volksreligionen wird man in einen positiven Zustand des Heils hineingeboren. Ihn gilt es zu bewahren. In Universalreligionen liegt das Heil dagegen in einem Zustand, der nicht gegeben ist, sondern erst gefunden werden muß. Der Mensch ist erlösungsbedürftig und muß sich verändern. Das Urchristentum wäre danach eine Universalreligion, die sich aus dem Judentum als einer klassischen Volksreligion entwickelt hat, wobei dies Judentum universalistische Tendenzen hat: Es wartet auf die weltweite Anerkennung des einen und einzigen Gottes durch alle Menschen und übt eine große Anziehungskraft auf Nichtjuden aus. Auch in diesem Kontext spielt die Taufe eine wichtige Rolle: Insofern sie im Urchristentum Heiden aus allen Völkern den Zutritt zum Heilsbereich ermöglicht, symbolisiert sie in ritueller Form ein universalreligiöses Strukturelement. Der Auftrag zur universalen Mission ist in Matt 28:18f. nicht zufällig mit dem Taufbefehl verbunden: "Darum gehet hin und macht zu Jüngern alle Völker: Taufet sie auf den Namen des Vaters und des Sohnes und des heiligen Geistes. . . ."[13]

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[12] Vgl. G. Mensching, *Volksreligion und Weltreligion* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1938); ders., *Die Religion. Erscheinungsformen, Strukturtypen und Lebensgesetze* (Goldmanns Gelbe Taschenbücher 882/883, München: Goldmann, 1959), 65–77; ders., *Soziologie der Religion* (Bonn: Röhrscheid, 1947), 25ff.

[13] Die Typologie G. Menschings paßt auf das Verhältnis von Judentum und Christentum sehr gut: Die verschärft pessimistische Anthropologie und der missionarische universale Anspruch unterscheiden das Urchristentum von anderen Gruppen

Diese drei Typologien lassen sich kombinieren. Es gibt Versöhnungsreligionen, die an ein Volk gebunden sind wie das Judentum. In Gestalt des aus ihm hervorgegangenen Urchristentums hat es sich in eine missionierende Universalreligion verwandelt. Es gibt ebenso Erlösungsreligionen, die an ein Volk und ein Gesellschaftssystem gebunden bleiben wie der Hinduismus. In Gestalt des Buddhismus hat er sich in eine universale Erlösungsreligion verwandelt. Alle vier Religionen existieren außerdem je nach Ländern und Zeiten ebenso als offizielle Mehrheitsreligion wie als subkulturelle Minderheitsreligion. Die folgende Tabelle soll die verschiedenen Möglichkeiten verdeutlichen. Gerade wegen der Einfachheit dieser kombinierten Typologien sei aber noch einmal daran erinnert: Alle Typologien vereinfachen; es handelt sich um idealtypische Konstruktionen.[14] Die Wirklichkeit kennt sehr viel komplexere Gebilde.

	Volksreligion		Universalreligion	
Versöhnungsreligion	Judentum		Christentum	
Erlösungsreligion	Hinduismus		Buddhismus	
	offizielle Religion	subkulturelle Religion	offizielle Religion	subkulturelle Religion

Versucht man nun den oben skizzierten rituellen Wandel bei der Entstehung der urchristlichen Taufe mit einem Wandel der gesamten Religionsstruktur zu korrelieren, so liegt folgende Hypothese nahe: Die Entstehung der Taufe ist eng mit der Entstehung einer herkunftsunabhängigen, versöhnungsorientierten und subkulturellen neuen Religion verbunden, die Menschen aus vielen Völkern in kleinen Gemeinschaften zusammenführte. An die Stelle der Verwandtschaft durch Geburt trat die Verwandtschaft durch Wiedergeburt. Die physische Geburt wurde durch das soziale Konstrukt einer rituell vermittelten Neugeburt ersetzt. Die soziale Konstruktion des neuen Menschen ist daher keine

im Judentum. Zu fragen ist, ob diese Typologie aber überall greift: Innerhalb der Philosophie kommt es in hellenistischer Zeit besonders in der Stoa zu einer Universalisierung des Denkens. Der stoische Kosmopolitismus ist aber nicht mit einer pessimistischen Anthropologie verbunden—es sei denn, daß der Gegensatz von Griechen und Barbaren durch den zwischen Weisen und Toren abgelöst wird, der "Tor" aber unverkennbar als zu überwindender Typos gilt.

[14] Sie sollen und wollen die historische Wirklichkeit nicht abbilden, sondern Begriffe an die Hand geben, um sie zu "messen", d.h. auf Übereinstimmung und Nicht-Übereinstimmung hin untersuchen.

beliebige Begleiterscheinung dieser neuen Religion, sie ist ihre konstitutive Voraussetzung. Entsprechend nehmen Taufe und Verwandlung des Menschen einen zentralen Ort in ihr ein.

Der rituelle Wandel (beim Übergang von wiederholten Waschungen zur einmaligen Taufe) könnte also mit einem Strukturwandel der Religion zusammenfallen. Darüber hinaus geht die weitere Vermutung, daß auch zwischen dem Strukturwandel der Religion und Änderungen in der Gesellschaft ein Zusammenhang besteht. Wenn sich durch Bekehrung und deren rituelle Symbolisierung in der Taufe der religiöse Status entscheidend verändert, so daß Unheil gegen Heil "ausgetauscht" wird, dann stellt sich die Frage, ob dies mit den allgemeinen Chancen sozialer Statusveränderung in der damaligen Gesellschaft zusammenhängt. Wir werden diese Fragen nur in Form eines Exkurses besprechen. Sie wären eine eigene Untersuchung wert.

II. *Drei Stadien bei der Entstehung der urchristlichen Taufe*

Zum Glück können wir unsere Leithypothese an konkreten Daten überprüfen. Ausgangspunkt für die Entstehung und Entwicklung der Taufe sind Waschungen, die kultische Reinheit herstellen sollen— vor allem nach Berührungen mit Unreinem und Totem, nach Geschlechtsverkehr, Menstruation, Geburt, bei Aussatz und anderen Krankheiten, ferner nach Berührungen mit Menschen, die aufgrund der aufgezählten Kriterien unrein waren (vgl. Lev 11:24–40; 14:1–9; 15:1–31; 16:4.24; Num 19:1–22; Jos c.Ap 2:198. 203). In der Zeit des zweiten Tempels gewannen solche Waschungen erhöhte Bedeutung. Ein Indiz dafür, ist daß im AT vorgeschriebene Waschungen seit dieser Zeit in vielen Fällen als Tauchbäder oder Vollbäder verstanden werden. Das hat Folgen für die Terminologie. Aus כבס (reinigen, abwaschen LXX πλύνω vgl. Lev 11:25 u.ö.) oder רחץ abspülen, waschen LXX λούομαι vgl. Exod 29:4) wird טבל (= tauchen griech. βάπτω).[15] Ein zweites Indiz dafür ist, daß zusätzliche Reinigungen verlangt wurden: Reinheitsvorschriften für Priester wurden in einigen Kreisen auf Laien ausgedehnt. Es kommt zu einer richtigen Taufbewegung im Judentum.[16] Von einigen dieser Täufergruppen ist

[15] Vgl. W. Brandt, *Die jüdischen Baptismen* (Gießen: Töpelmann, 1910). G. Barth, Taufe, 27f.

[16] Vgl. J. Thomas, *Le mouvement baptiste en Palestine et Syrie* (Gembloux: J. Duculat, 1935).

nur der Name erhalten (etwa von den "Hemerobaptisten", von denen Hegesipp berichtet, vgl. Eus. h.e. IV, 22,7). Von anderen Täufern wie Bannus hören wir nur, daß er in der Wüste am Jordan lebte und täglich Reinigungen vollzog (Jos Vita 11). Nur bei drei innerjüdischen Täufergruppen besitzen wir detaillierte Informationen: bei Essenern, Johannes dem Täufer und der Jesusbewegung, die sich im Laufe des 1. Jh. als Urchristentum gegenüber dem Judentum verselbständigt. Diese drei Gruppen repräsentieren drei Phasen innerhalb jenes rituellen Wandels, an dessen Anfang jüdische Waschungen und an dessen Ende die urchristliche Taufe steht.

1. *Die essenischen Waschungen.* Bei den Essenern dienten tägliche Tauchbäder vor der gemeinsamen Mahlzeit dazu, die an der Thora orientierte jüdische Lebensweise vollkommen zu praktizieren. Josephus berichtet über diese täglichen Waschungen: "Nach dieser Reinigung begeben sie sich gemeinsam in ein besonderes Gebäude, zu dem keiner von den Andersgesinnten Zutritt hat; sie selbst betreten als Reine wie einen heiligen Bezirk den Speisesaal" (Jos War 2,129). Josephus hat dabei Essener im Blick, wie sie an vielen Orten Palästinas einen "Verein" bildeten. Die Qumranschriften weisen mehrfach auf diese regelmäßigen Waschungen hin (z.B. CD X,10–13; XI,22) Ausgrabungen im Zentrum der Essener, in Qumran, bestätigen wahrscheinlich diese Angaben. Neben Wasserbecken für die Gerberei (?) finden sich Becken, die zur rituellen Reinigung dienen.[17] Das Motiv der Essener bei ihren Waschungen war es, priesterliche Reinheitsvorschriften auf die ganze Gemeinde zu übertragen. Josephus spricht deshalb von ihren Speisesälen als einem "heiligen Bezirk" (εἰς ἅγιόν τι τέμενος War 2,129). Die Gemeinde will—als Ersatz für den verunreinigten Tempel mit seiner illegitimen Priesterschaft—das wahre Israel verwirklichen, das sich vollkommen an die Gebote der Thora hält. Sie versteht sich als Gemeinde der Umkehrenden.[18] Umkehr ist "Umkehr zur Thora"

[17] Die Deutung der archäologischen Funde ist bis heute umstritten. Aber eine Deutung wenigstens einiger Wasserbecken auf rituelle Bäder ist mit dem archäologischen Befund vereinbar vgl. die vorsichtig abwägende Diskussion bei F. Rohrhirsch, *Wissenschaftstheorie und Qumran. Die Geltungsbegründung von Aussagen in der Biblischen Archäologie am Beispiel von Chirbet Qumran und En Feschcha* (Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus 32, Freiburg Schweiz/Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 1996), 160–185.

[18] Vgl. H.J. Fabry, *Die Wurzel SUB in der Qumran-Literatur* (Köln/Bonn: Hanstein, 1975); ders.: "Umkehr und Metanoia als monastisches Ideal in der 'Mönchsgemeinde' von Qumran," *Erbe und Auftrag* 53 (1977): 163–180.

(1QS V; CD XV,9). Gerade deshalb ist es wichtig zu betonen: Die Waschungen selbst sind nicht Zeichen der Umkehr, sondern setzen die Umkehr voraus. Zugelassen wird zu ihnen (und zur vollen Mitgliedschaft) nur, wer seine Umkehr unter Beweis gestellt und geprüft worden ist (vgl. 1 QS V,13f.; VI,14–17.22). Es handelt sich also nicht um eine Umkehrtaufe, schon deshalb nicht, weil sie nicht einmalig vollzogen wird, sondern immer wieder. Diese Waschungen vollziehen vielmehr täglich den Übergang von der profanen Welt der Arbeit in die sakrale Welt des Gemeinschaftsmahls. Ihr vorbereitender Charakter ist unverkennbar: Die Nähe des Heiligen wird voll erst im Gemeinschaftsmahl erfahren. Es handelt sich also um ein wiederholbares Ritual im Dienste der Vervollkommnung der jüdischen Lebensform, d.h. des thoragemäßen Lebens. Man bleibt in derselben symbolischen Welt mit allen anderen Juden und bleibt innerhalb desselben Systems.

Und doch kündigt sich bei den Essenern ein Stück Religionswandel an: der Übergang von der offiziellen Religion des "common judaism" zu einer subkulturellen Religiosität einer kleinen Gemeinschaft innerhalb des Judentums—z.T. mit unverkennbar gegenkulturellem Bewußtsein, wie die schroffe Unterscheidung zwischen den Kindern des Lichts und der Finsternis zeigt. Nach unserem Verständnis basiert der Eintritt in die essenische Gemeinschaft auf einer Entscheidung des einzelnen Menschen, nach dem Selbstverständnis dieser Gemeinschaft aber ist die Ursache dieses Eintritts letztlich die souveräne Prädestination Gottes, d.h. eine Entscheidung Gottes und nicht des Menschen. Die Grundstruktur einer Volksreligion bleibt insofern erhalten: Der Heilsstatus ist vorgegeben, jedoch nicht in der Erwählung des Volkes und der Zugehörigkeit des Einzelnen zu ihm, sondern in der Erwählung der einzelnen Gruppenglieder zur Gemeinde. Aber nicht die societas (des allgemeinen Judentums) ist der Heilsträger, sondern die communitas der Essener. Diese communitas versucht in sich zu verwirklichen, wozu nach ihrer Auffassung ganz Israel verpflichtet ist. Daher werden keine neuen Riten eingeführt, sondern die bestehenden intensiviert. So kommt es zur Vermehrung der Waschungen.

2. *Die Umkehrtaufe des Johannes* läßt sich von diesen Waschungen in Qumran klar unterscheiden. Sie ist ein Zeichen der Umkehr angesichts des unmittelbar bevorstehenden Gerichts. Dies ist so nahe, daß keine Zeit mehr bleibt, die Ernsthaftigkeit der Umkehr durch ethisches Tun (d.h. durch "Früchte der Umkehr") unter Beweis zu stellen.

Daher bietet der Täufer die Taufe als "symbolischen Ersatzakt" an: als ein eschatologisches Sakrament, das die Ernsthaftigkeit der Umkehr bezeugt und im Endgericht Rettung verheißt.[19] Zwei Merkmale sind dieser Taufe eigen:

Sie wird im Unterschied zu allen anderen jüdischen Waschungen nur einmal vollzogen, denn sie ist konstitutiv auf das einmalige eschatologische Gericht bezogen.

Sie ist im Unterschied zu allen anderen jüdischen Waschungen keine Selbstwaschung, sondern wird vom Täufer persönlich vollzogen und ist so fest mit seiner Person verbunden, daß wahrscheinlich nicht einmal sein Schüler Jesus getauft hat.

Wegen dieser beiden Besonderheiten—Einmaligkeit und Bindung an die Person des Propheten—läßt sich die Johannestaufe allein von jüdischen Waschungen her nicht erklären. Sie gehört vielmehr zu den prophetischen Symbolhandlungen. So wie Jesaja in einer einmaligen Situation nackt ging, um vor kommendem Unheil zu warnen (Isa 20:1ff.), so wie Hosea eine Prostituierte heiratete, um Israels Untreue anzuklagen (Hos 1:2ff.), so vollzieht der Täufer seine einmalige Taufe—als Medium seiner prophetischen Botschaft vom nahen Gericht und als letzte Chance, ihm durch Umkehr zu entrinnen. Die Deutung als prophetische Symbolhandlung erklärt, warum sie konstitutiv an die Person des Propheten gebunden blieb. Jedoch war es eine Symbolhandlung, die gewissermaßen "demokratisiert" wurde: Alle müssen sie vollziehen. Alle müssen zum Träger der Botschaft werden: Umkehr ist für alle geboten!

Mit den traditionellen Reinigungsriten hat diese Johannestaufe dennoch eins gemeinsam: sie bleibt ein vorbereitender Ritus. Auf seine Taufe mit Wasser soll die Taufe eines Stärkeren folgen, eine Taufe mit Feuer und Geist—einem Symbol für das endgültige Gericht: sei es durch Gott oder durch eine zweite messianische Gestalt (wobei messianisch im weitesten Sinne zu verstehen ist).

Anders als die Waschungen der Essener dient die Umkehrtaufe des Täufers nicht dazu, die an der Thora orientierte Lebensform zu vervollkommnen, sondern ein tiefes Unbehagen an ihr zum Ausdruck zu bringen: die Notwendigkeit, diese Lebensform von ihrem Ursprung her zu erneuern. Dies Unbehagen kommt direkt und indirekt zum Ausdruck:

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[19] Zum Täufer vgl. G. Theissen/A. Merz, *Der historische Jesus. Ein Lehrbuch* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 184–198.

Direkt kritisiert der Täufer das Vertrauen auf die physische Abstammung: "Denkt nur nicht, daß ihr bei euch sagen könntet: Wir haben Abraham zum Vater. Denn ich sage euch: Gott vermag dem Abraham aus diesen Steinen Kinder zu erwecken" (Matt 3:9 par). Die Abrahamkindschaft, d.h. die genealogische Verwandtschaft aller Israeliten ist ohne Wert.

Indirekt kritisiert der Täufer die zentrale religiöse Institution des damaligen Judentums: den Tempel. Denn hier im Tempel wurden ja Sühneriten angeboten—sowohl zur Sühne von Sünden des ganzen Volkes im großen Versöhnungstag als auch für Sünden der einzelnen Menschen. Wenn der Täufer eine "Taufe zur Vergebung der Sünden" als einzige Chance einer Rettung verkündigt—dann erklärt er indirekt: Die traditionellen Sühneriten sind wirkungslos geworden. Das priesterliche Programm von Heiligkeit und Reinheit versagt.

Auch wenn der Täufer die kritische Einstellung zum Tempel mit den Essenern teilt, so unterscheidet er sich doch in diesen beiden Punkten von ihnen: Bei den Essenern finden wir einen ungebrochenen genealogischen Stolz auf Abstammung und Herkunft. Die Priester unter den Essenern nennen sich "Söhne Zadoks" und lehnen die Hohepriester am Jerusalemer Heiligtum ab, die schon lange keine Zadokiden mehr waren. Und ihr Programm einer vollkommenen Thorapraxis ist durch und durch ein Programm priesterlicher Heiligkeit und Reinheit: Die Gemeinde will den wahren Tempel in der eigenen Gemeinschaft realisieren.

Wenn man den Unterschied zwischen den Waschungen der Essener und der Johannestaufe mit einem Satz erfassen will, so kann man sagen: Aus einem Vervollkommnungsritual innerhalb einer priesterlichen Lebensform bei den Essenern ist beim Täufer ein prophetisches Umkehrritual geworden. Wir bleiben aber beim Täufer noch immer systemimmanent innerhalb derselben symbolischen Welt. Jedoch sind deren Bewohner so sehr von deren Grundlagen und Normen abgewichen, daß sie alle umkehren müssen—auch die Frommen, auch die Chassidim, auch die "Essener" (was nichts anderes als die griechische Entsprechung für "Chassidim" sein dürfte).

In der Entstehung der Johannestaufe tritt ein neuer Aspekt des Religionswandels innerhalb der biblisch geprägten Religion hervor: der Schritt von einer Versöhnungs- zur Erlösungsreligion. Die Taufe steht in einem Zusammenhang mit der Eschatologisierung des Weltverständnisses, das sich in späten Zusätzen zu den Prophetenbüchern abzeichnet und in der apokalyptischen Literatur zum Durchbruch

kommt. Das Heil kann danach nicht mehr in dieser Welt gefunden werden, sondern nur noch in einer neuen Welt, in der Israel endlich die ihm von Gott zugedachte Rolle spielen wird.[20] Freilich ist zu betonen: Erlösungsreligiöse Züge sind hier nur in ersten Ansätzen vorhanden. Denn die neue Welt ist eine erneuerte *Welt*. Die grundsätzliche Weltbejahung bleibt also erhalten, nur daß sie die gegenwärtigen Weltverhältnisse sprengt und erst in einer anderen Welt zur Erfüllung kommt. Auch ist der Individualismus begrenzt. Der einzelne muß sich durch Treue zur Thora schon in dieser Welt als Bürger der neuen Welt erweisen. Aber der grundsätzliche Bezug zur Gemeinschaft geht nicht verloren. Die Gemeinschaft wird in der neuen Welt erst zu ihrem Ziel kommen. Dennoch gilt: Beim Übergang von dieser zur neuen Welt ist der Einzelne in einer vorher nicht gekannten Weise gefordert. Die Johannestaufe ist Ritualisierung seiner individuellen Entscheidung und Hoffnung auf eine neue Welt. Sie ist ein "eschatologisches Sakrament". Der Widerspruch zur traditionellen Versöhnungsreligion wird bewußt artikuliert: Es genügt nicht, zur Abrahamskindschaft zu gehören, um das Heil zu erlagen. Alle müssen durch Umkehr und Taufe aus einem Unheilszustand erlöst werden. Freilich bleiben die erlösungsreligiösen Züge im Rahmen der traditionellen Religion. Sie sprengen diese nicht. Johannes der Täufer gehört mitten ins Judentum und seine vielen Umkehrbewegungen hinein.

3. Am Ende dieser Entwicklung steht die *urchristliche Wiedergeburtstaufe*. Auch sie ist im Urchristentum nicht sofort da, sondern Ergebnis einer Entwicklung innerhalb der Jesusbewegung und des Urchristentums. Aber ehe wir diese Entwicklung nachzeichnen, sei der entscheidende Schritt über die Johannestaufe hinaus hervorgehoben. Aus einer Umkehrtaufe, die sich an alle Juden wendet und sie zur Umkehr zu dem einen und einzigen Gott aufruft, wird im Urchristentum eine Konversionstaufe, die allen Menschen –besonders aber auch Heiden angeboten wird. Bei den Heiden geht es nicht darum, daß sie auf einen Weg zurückkehren, von dem sie abgeirrt waren. Bei Heiden bedeutet Konversion: Absage an den bisherigen Weg und an die alten Götter und Religionen und Hinwendung zu dem einen und einzigen

[20] Vgl. die kurze Skizze dieser Eschatologisierung des Weltverständnisses in G. Theissen/A. Merz, Der historische Jesus, 226–231.

Gott. Die Taufe signalisiert jetzt nicht mehr einen systemimmanenten Wechsel und einen Übergang innerhalb derselben symbolischen Welt, sondern einen Wechsel von einer symbolischen Welt in eine ganz andere. Auch wenn man sowohl bei Juden- wie Heidenchristen von "Umkehr" sprechen kann, meint derselbe Begriff hier wie dort etwas Verschiedenes. Judenchristen haben (nach dem Selbstverständnis des Urchristentums) schon immer ein Verhältnis zu dem einen Gott, der sich in ihrer Geschichte als Juden offenbart. Mit der Zuwendung zum christlichen Glauben vollendet sich für sie, was in ihren Traditionen angelegt ist—so wenigstens sehen es die ersten Christen, die im ganzen AT Hinweise auf Jesus finden. Man kann hier mit einer modernen Terminologie von einer "normativen Entscheidung" sprechen. Die grundlegenden Normen und Werte bleiben dieselben, es geht nur um ihre Verwirklichung. Anders ist das bei Heidenchristen: Sie müssen sich von ihren bisherigen Normen und Werten trennen, ja, müssen sie als Götzendienst verurteilen. Von ihnen wird nicht nur eine normative, sondern eine "existenzielle Entscheidung" gefordert, d.h. eine Entscheidung, bei der auch die orientierenden Normen und Werte zur Entscheidung stehen und revidiert werden müssen.[21] Wie gesagt: Die Taufe wird im Urchristentum erst innerhalb einer stufenweisen Entwicklung zu diesem Wiedergeburtsritual, das einen völligen Neuanfang symbolisiert und ermöglichen soll. Wir können diese Entwicklung in drei Schritten nachvollziehen:

a) Der erste Schritt wurde mit *Jesus* getan—oder genauer: Es war fast ein Rück-Schritt. Jesus war zwar ein Schüler des Täufers. Aber er hat mit hoher Wahrscheinlichkeit nicht selbst getauft. Die einzige Notiz über eine Tauftätigkeit Jesu (in John 3:22, die in 4:2 korrigiert wird) könnte allenfalls sagen: Daß Jesus am Anfang seiner Tätigkeit getauft hat. Die Jesusüberlieferung als ganze weiß nichts davon. Da das Urchristentum überall die Taufe übte, ist das ein auffälliger Zug: Wie nahe hätte es gelegen, wenn man die urchristliche Praxis in die Jesusüberlieferung zurückprojiziert hätte, um sie aus ihr zu legitimieren. Wenn das (außer in John 3:22) nicht geschah, so spricht das

[21] Die Unterscheidung von normativen und existenziellen Konflikten und Entscheidungen geht auf H. Thomae, *Konflikt, Entscheidung, Verantwortung. Ein Beitrag zur Psychologie der Entscheidung* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1974) zurück. Auf S. 130 bringt er die Entstehung existenzieller Entscheidungen mit der modernen säkularisierten Welt zusammen, die sich gegenüber vorgegebenen Normen emanzipiert. Auf S. 145f. bringt er aber (mit Recht) die Bekehrung des Augustinus als ein antikes Beispiel für existenzielle Entscheidungen.

gegen eine Tauftätigkeit Jesu. Diese Abweichung Jesu von seinem Meister Johannes ist aufschlußreich: Jesus stand mit seiner Botschaft viel mehr im Zentrum des Judentums als der Täufer. Er verkündete nicht nur das Gericht, sondern sehr viel eindringlicher die Gnade Gottes gerade für die Außenseiter und die "verlorenen Schafe Israels", die er mit seiner Botschaft zu integrieren suchte. Er wirkte nicht in der Wüste, sondern im bewohnten Land. Er gründete keine Sondergemeinschaft wie die Essener, die alle anderen für Kinder der Finsternis hielten. Vielmehr hat er sich diesen "Kindern der Finsternis" zugewandt. Kurz: Auf dem Hintergrund der Essener und des Täufers scheint Jesus eindeutig mitten ins Judentum zu gehören—sehr viel mehr als diese beiden Vergleichsgrößen, bei denen niemand bestreitet, daß sie tief im Judentum verwurzelt sind. Jesus spricht z.B. unbefangen von der Abrahamskindschaft—aber ohne die kritischen Akzente, die wir beim Täufer finden (vgl. Matt 8:11; Mark 12:26; Luke 13:16; 19:9).

Wenn man so will, tritt uns im Wirken Jesu das Judentum als Versöhnungsreligion in erneuerter Gestalt entgegen. Wir finden zwar bei ihm wie in großen Teilen des damaligen Judentums die Eschatologisierung des Weltverständnisses, also die ersten Ansätze einer Erlösungsreligion im Rahmen einer Versöhnungsreligion. Aber Jesus modifiziert sie in charakteristischer Weise. Die neue Welt begegnet schon mitten in der alten Welt. Dort, wo Menschen geheilt und Dämonen vertrieben werden (Matt 12:28), ist die Gottesherrschaft schon jetzt wirksam. Die Erneuerung der Gemeinschaft wird in der Gottesherrschaft zum zentralen Anliegen. Das Liebesgebot führt in die Nähe der Gottesherrschaft (vgl. Mark 12:28ff. und 12:34). Es wird zugespitzt zur Liebe des Feindes, des Fremden und des Deklassierten. Der Verzicht auf die Taufe ist daher kein Zufall: Die Taufe grenzt von anderen ab. Jesus will aber in seiner Verkündigung gerade die Ausgegrenzten zurückholen.

b) Den nächsten Schritt in der Entwicklung der Taufe tat die *nachösterliche Jesusbewegung*. Obwohl Jesus selbst nicht taufte, wird die Taufe nach Ostern überall zum entscheidenden Initiationsritual der neu entstehenden urchristlichen Gemeinden. Sie ist nirgendwo umstritten. Sie wird mit einem in der Religionsgeschichte außergewöhnlichen Konsens von allen praktiziert. Vermutlich hat das drei Gründe: (1.) Jesus hatte sich selbst taufen lassen. Das wirkte als Vorbild für alle Christen—zumindest als Legitimation der Wassertaufe. (2.) Der Täufer hatte einen Stärkeren geweissagt, der mit Feuer und Geist

taufen würde. Diese Verheißung galt jetzt als in Erfüllung gegangen. (3.) Es gab ein soziales Bedürfnis nach einem Initiationsritus. Die Taufe erfüllte die Funktion einer rituellen Abgrenzung zwischen Binnengruppe und Außengruppe.

Die Taufe wurde so zum Identitätsmerkmal der neuen christlichen Gruppen und dabei in zwei Punkten neu gedeutet:

Sie geschah jetzt "auf den Namen Jesu", d.h. sie wurde von ihrer persönlichen Bindung an den Täufer abgelöst. An ihre Stelle trat die Bindung an Jesus. Der Getaufte wurde seinem Namen, d.h. seiner Macht und Hoheit unterstellt—unabhängig davon, was die Wendung εἰς τὸ ὄνομα einmal sprachlich bedeutet hat.[22]

Die Taufe wurde ferner nicht mehr nur als Taufe mit Wasser verstanden, sondern als Taufe mit Heiligem Geist. Sie verlor damit ihren vorläufigen Charakter—ihre Vorausdeutung auf eine noch größere und entscheidende Taufe. Die ersten Christen behaupteten: Unsere Taufe ist mehr als ein Ritus, der auf die eigentliche Begegnung mit dem Heiligen und dem Heil vorausweist. Sie verwirklicht selbst das Heil. Sie ist selbst ein "eschatologisches Ereignis". Man steht hier nicht nur an der Schwelle zu einer neuen Welt, man überschreitet diese Schwelle.

Die Taufe wurde so aus einem eschatologischen Sakrament in der nachösterlichen Jesusbewegung zum Merkmal einer kleinen Gemeinschaft. Während Jesus die Verlorenen ganz Israels sammeln wollte, entsteht nun mitten in Israel eine communitas—als kleine Subkultur in der jüdischen societas. Aus einer Revitalisierung des Judentums als Mehrheitsreligion bei Jesus wird eine Minderheitsreligion oder eine Sekte im Judentum. Die Taufe ist eng mit dieser Ausdifferenzierung einer Kleingruppenreligion aus der umfassenderen Religion des Judentums verbunden.

c) Der dritte Schritt wurde erst im Heidenchristentum vollzogen. Bei der Öffnung der Jesusbewegung für Heidenchristen veränderte sich der Charakter der Taufe noch einmal. Zum ersten Mal finden wir bei dem Heidenmissionar Paulus die neue Deutung der Taufe als Taufe "in den Tod" oder "auf den Tod Jesu hin", d.h. sie erhält eine symbolische Beziehung zum Sterben und Auferstehen Jesu. Zwar betont Paulus, daß die Auferstehung noch Zukunft ist (erst seine

[22] Vgl. L. Hartman, *Auf den Namen des Herrn Jesus. Die Taufe in den neutestamentlichen Schriften* (SBS 148, Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1992). Ders.; Art. *"Baptism," Anchor Bible Dictionary* I (New York/London usw.: Doubleday, 1992): 583–594.

Schüler im Col und Eph identifizieren die Taufe mit der Auferstehung des Glaubenden)—, aber schon Paulus spricht in Röm 6 davon, daß die Getauften (schon jetzt) in einem neuen Leben (ἐν καινότητι ζωῆς) wandeln. Wir müssen uns hier auf vier Anmerkungen zu diesem neuen Taufverständnis begnügen:

Die erste Anmerkung betrifft die neue Todesdeutung der Taufe. Sie geschah in Anlehnung an die Sprache der Mysterienreligionen.[23] Diese kannten Initiationsriten wie die von Apuleius geschilderte Isisweihe (Apul Met XI), die den Durchgang durch den Tod zum Leben darstellten. Aber es gab wichtige Unterschiede: Eine "Waschung" gab es zwar auch in Verbindung mit der Isisweihe, aber sie geschah zehn Tage vorher in einem normalen Bad. Mit ihr war die Symbolik von Tod und Leben gerade nicht verbunden. Die Aufwertung der Waschung (d.h. der Taufe) zu einem Tod und Leben darstellenden Ritual und die Verwandlung eines vorbereitenden Rituals zum Zentralakt der Initiation—das ist im Urchristentum neu. Ferner identifizieren sich die Mysterien meist mit der älteren (in der Regel weiblichen) Partnergottheit, die über den Verlust und das Sterben einer jüngeren Partnergottheit klagt. In der christlichen Taufe aber identifiziert sich der Gläubige mit der sterbenden Gottheit, die zu neuem Leben bestimmt ist. Mit einem Satz: Paulus benutzt hier Mysteriensprache, aber er deutet mit ihr einen nur aus dem Urchristentum selbst heraus verständlichen Ritus.

Die zweite Anmerkung betrifft den "Sitz im Leben" dieser neuen Deutung. Sie hat sachlich und funktional ihren Ort in der Heidenmission. Hier wurde ein sehr viel radikalerer Bruch mit dem Vorleben verlangt als bei Juden, die sich dem Christentum anschlossen. Hier konnte man die heidnische Vorzeit als Nacht, Finsternis und Tod betrachten. Diese Sicht der heidnischen Vorzeit übernahm man von

[23] Nachdem die sog. "religionsgeschichtliche Schule" die urchristliche Taufe (und insbesondere die Taufe in den Tod Jesu) ganz von den Analogien in den Mysterienreligionen gedeutet hat, neigt man heute zu größerer Vorsicht bei solchen Ableitungen: Sie basieren oft darauf, daß vorweg die außerchristlichen Religionen und ihre Riten einer unbewußten interpretatio christiana unterzogen wurden. Ganz aus eigenen Motiven des Urchristentums deutet die Taufe A.J.M. Wedderburn, *Baptism and Resurrection—Studies in Pauline Theology against its Graeco-Roman Background* (WUNT 44; Tübingen: Mohr 1987). Etwas positiver über Zusammenhänge mit den Mysterienreligionen urteilt D. Zeller, "Die Mysterienkulte und die paulinische Soteriologie (Röm 6,1–11)," in: *Suchbewegungen. Synkretismus—kulturelle Identität und kirchliches Bekenntnis*, ed. H.P. Siller (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1991): 42–61; ders.; Art. *"Mysterien/Mysterienreligionen," Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 23 (Berlin/New York; de Gruyter, 1994): 504–526.

der jüdischen Proselytentheologie, in der die Sprache der Mysterienreligionen spürbar ist. Als sich die ägyptische Priestertochter Aseneth zum Judentum bekehrt, betet sie zu dem Gott, "der das All lebendig macht und aus der Finsternis ins Licht ruft, aus dem Irrtum in die Wahrheit und aus dem Tod ins Leben" (8,10). Aufgrund ihrer Bekehrung ist sie "neu geschaffen, neu gebildet und neu belebt" (15,5). Schon bei der Bekehrung von Heiden zum Judentum finden wir also die Vorstellung einer "Wiedergeburt" und einer "Neuschöpfung", die weit mehr ist als eine Umkehr innerhalb derselben symbolisch gedeuteten Welt.[24] Sie ist der Eintritt in eine ganz neue Welt.[25] Sie transzendiert das alte Überzeugungssystem.

Die dritte Anmerkung betrifft den sozialen Sinn der Taufe, der ihr von den ersten Christen zugeschrieben wurde. Die Neuschöpfung des Menschen transzendiert in den Augen der Christen die traditionellen Unterschiede zwischen Völkern, Klassen und Geschlechtern. Diejenigen, die in der Taufe "Christus angezogen haben", sind nicht mehr Juden oder Griechen, Sklaven oder Freie, Mann oder Frau (Gal 3:28). Sie haben als "Kinder Gottes" einen Status, der unabhängig von ihrem Status in der Gesellschaft ist. Deswegen sind sie untereinander eng verbunden und "einer in Christus" (Gal 3:28). Diese einheitsstiftende Funktion der Taufe betont auch der Epheserbrief, wenn er aufzählt, was Christen vereint: "ein Leib und Geist, . . . eine Hoffnung . . ., ein Herr, ein Glaube, eine Taufe, ein Gott und Vater aller, der da ist über allen und durch alle und in allen" (Eph 4:4–6). Indem nun die Taufe bei den Paulusschülern (in Col und Eph) nicht nur als rituelle Symbolisierung einer conformitas mit dem Tod Jesu verstanden wird, sondern auch als conformitas mit seiner Auferstehung (Col 2:12; vgl. Eph 2:6 und 5:14), wird der Eintritt in die Gemeinschaft der Christen selbst zu einem Eintritt "in den Himmel". Denn dort werden die Christen schon jetzt "miteingesetzt mit Christus"—in eine Hoheitsstellung (Eph 2:6), die freilich verborgen ist (Col 3:2ff.). Bei

[24] Auch die Rabbinen nennen den zum Judentum übergetretenen Heiden ein "neugeborenes Kind" (BJabmuth 22a; 48b; 62a; 97b). Vgl. E. Sjöberg, "Wiedergeburt und Neuschöpfung im palästinischen Judentum," *Studia Theologica* 4 (1950/1): 44–85.

[25] Die Vorstellung, es handle sich nur um die Zusicherung zukünftigen Heils, geht an der Symbolsprache der Bekehrung vorbei: Der Proselyt wird ein neugeborenes Kind, Lucius besiegelt mit seiner Einweihung in die Isis-Mysterien seine (Rück-) Verwandlung vom Tier zum Menschen, Paulus sieht in Röm 6:1ff. mit der Taufe den Beginn eines neuen Lebens schon jetzt. So H.J. Eckstein, "Auferstehung und gegenwärtiges Leben nach Röm 6,1–11. Präsentische Eschatologie bei Paulus?," *Theologische Beiträge* 28 (1997): 8–23.

solchen Aussagen handelt es sich nicht um einen individualistischen Enthusiasmus, der Entrückung aus den Bindungen des Alltags sucht. Vielmehr drückt sich darin eine ungeheure Aufwertung der Gemeinschaft aus: Diese Gemeinschaft ist selbst ein Stück neuer Welt in der alten Welt.

Die vierte Anmerkung betrifft die Verbindung von religiöser Deutung und rituellem Vollzug. Die Neudeutung der Taufe als ein symbolisches Todesgeschick und als Vermittlung neuen Lebens führt zu einer Auseinanderentwicklung von rituellem Vollzug und symbolischem Sinn. Wichtig ist, daß Paulus die Taufe nicht direkt als ein symbolisches Sterben deutet, sondern als ein symbolisches Begrabenwerden. Das Begräbnis aber ist nicht der Tod selbst, sondern bestätigt ihn. Der Tod ist schon vorausgesetzt. Zudem gibt es zwischen einem Wasserbad (der Taufe) und einem Begräbnis keine ikonische Beziehung.[26]

[26] Inwieweit der rituelle Taufvollzug anschauliche Symbolik enthält, die in der Tauftheologie nur noch entfaltet wurde, oder ein karges Reinigungsritual durch symbolische Deutungen (sekundär) aufgeladen wurde, ist umstritten. Eine entfaltete rituelle Symbolik nimmt W.A. Meeks, *Urchristentum und Stadtkultur. Die soziale Welt der paulinischen Gemeinden* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1993), 307-322, an: Entkleiden, Hinabsteigen ins Wasser, Taufe, Heraufsteigen, Salbung, Bekleidung, Bekenntnis, Sitz auf einem Ehrenplatz – all das wurde rituell inszeniert. Verbreitet ist die Deutung, die Todeserfahrung werde durch das völlige Untertauchen und Auftauchen (als Erfahrung des neuen Lebens) symbolisiert. Die Gegenposition vertritt – m.E. mit guten Gründen – E. Stommel, "'Begraben mit Christus' (Röm 6,4) und der Taufritus," *RQ* 49 (1954): 1–20; ders., "Christliche Taufriten und antike Badesitten," *JAC* 2 (1959): 5–14. Bildliche Darstellungen der Taufe und archäologische Funde von Baptisterien zeigen: Die Täuflinge stehen nur bis zu den Knien im Wasser. Die Taufbecken sind gar nicht tief genug, um ein völliges Untertauchen zu inszenieren. Die eigentliche Taufe vollzieht sich durch Besprengung oder Begießung mit Wasser. Kurz: die "Taufe in den Tod" wird rituell nicht als Todeserfahrung inszeniert. Dies ist eine Deutung, die aus dem Ritual nicht ablesbar ist und weit über den äußeren Vollzug hinaus weist. Die spätere Entwicklung zeigt dann Versuche, das Ritual an seine Deutung anzunähern – etwa in Gestalt kreuzförmiger Taufbecken. Abgesehen davon: Selbst wenn ein (so nicht belegbares) völliges Untertauchen den Tod symbolisch darstellen soll, so bleibt doch noch immer die Schwierigkeit, daß Jesus nicht den Tod des Ertrinkens starb, sondern gekreuzigt wurde. Nimmt man hinzu, daß auch das Abendmahl – als Essen und Trinken des Leibes und Blutes Christi – einen anikonischen Sinngehalt hat (Brot ist kein Fleisch, Wein kein Blut), so wird man auch bei der Taufe mit einem "Auseinanderdriften" von Ritual und symbolischem Sinn rechnen müssen. Beide Rituale sind wahrscheinlich erst sekundär vom Tode Jesu her neu gedeutet worden! – Als eine frühe Stimme, die für einen anikonischen Sinn der Taufe plädiert, sei A. Schweitzer, *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus* (Tübingen: Mohr 1930), 19f., angeführt: "Auf die Symbolik der Handlung greift er (sc. Paulus) zur Erklärung des Vorgangs nicht zurück. Er reflektiert nicht über sie. Nirgends deutet er Röm 6,3–6 an, daß er die Taufe als ein Begrabenwerden und Auferstehen mit Christo ansieht, weil der Täufling im Wasser untertaucht und wieder emportaucht. Solche sinnvollen Erklärungen erfinden die Ausleger zu seinen Worten hinzu."

Wenn Paulus in Röm 6 sagt, daß die Christen mit der "Gleichgestalt des Todes" verwachsen wurden, so meint er mit dieser "Gleichgestalt" nicht etwa die Taufe als Abbild des Todes Jesu. Vielmehr denkt er an eine conformitas zwischen einem inneren Geschehen in den Christen und dem Sterben und Auferstehen des Christus. Von dieser conformitas kann er auch ohne Bezug zur Taufe sprechen (z.B. Gal 2:19f.; Phil 3:10f.). So paradox es ist: Die theologische Aufwertung des Rituals hat zu einer an-ikonischen Entfernung von der sie begründenden "Story" (oder dem den Ritus begründenden "Mythos") geführt: Das Ritual wird zur Außenseite eines inneren Geschehens, zu dem eine anschauliche und ikonische Beziehung nicht mehr gegeben ist. Das Ritual lebt vom Glauben der Gemeinschaft—von dem, was diese Gemeinschaft in ihrem Glauben in das Ritual hineinliest. Nicht das Ritual selbst, sondern die Deutung wird zum entscheidenden Element des Ritus.

Fassen wir zusammen: Im hellenistischen Urchristentum erhält die Taufe einen neuen Sinn als unanschauliche rituelle Inszenierung eines symbolischen Sterbens und eines neuen Lebens, das in eine Gemeinschaft hineinführt, in der alle sozialen Unterschiede überwunden sein sollen. Alle Menschen gehören potentiell zu dieser Gemeinschaft, denn an allen soll sich eine fundamentale Neuschöpfung vollziehen. Die Getauften sind in Christus "ein neues Geschöpf" (Gal 6:15; 2 Cor 5:17). Hier wird ein letzter Schritt zu einer missionierenden Universalreligion vollzogen. Die Revitalisierung der jüdischen Versöhnungsreligion bei Jesus, die Entstehung einer subkulturellen Religion im Judentum und deren Entwicklung zu einer missionierenden Universalreligion ist mit einem rituellen Wandel verbunden: Bei Jesus treten abgrenzende Riten ganz zurück, nach Ostern wird die Taufe zum sozialen Identitätsmerkmal einer neuen religiösen Gemeinschaft, in der Heidenmission wird sie zum Symbol einer grundsätzlichen Veränderung des Menschen, die mit dem alten Menschen alle sozialen Unterschiede hinter sich läßt. Die urchristliche Wiedergeburtstaufe dokumentiert das Vertrauen der neuen Religion, wirklich jeden Men-

A. Schweitzer sieht darin einen Unterschied zu den Mysterienreligionen: "In diesen ist alles in der sinnvollen Handlung begründet. Der Ritus wirkt, was er darstellt. Symbol und Wirklichkeit durchdringen sich. Wer die Weihen empfängt, macht äußerlich durch, was er innerlich erleben soll. Jede Einzelheit hat ihre Bedeutung" (p. 20).

schen ansprechen zu können. Denn gleichgültig, was er in Gegenwart und Gesellschaft war, entscheidend ist, daß auch er dazu bestimmt ist, ein "neues Geschöpf" zu werden und durch eine "Wiedergeburt" die Vergangenheit hinter sich zu lassen. Die Wiedergeburtstaufe ermöglicht so die Entstehung einer Religion, die für alle Menschen offen ist.

III. *Die soziale Konstruktion des neuen Menschen*

Die Entstehungsgeschichte der Taufe führt von wiederholten Waschungen zu einem einmaligen "rite de passage", jedoch ist es ein Übergangsritus, der nicht nur einen biographischen Wandel im Leben eines Menschen symbolisiert, sondern die Verwandlung des alten Menschen in einen neuen Menschen als Teil der Verwandlung der alten Welt in eine neue Welt. Die neue Schöpfung wird in der Umkehr und Erneuerung jedes einzelnen Menschen verwirklicht. Dieser "rite de passage" vollzieht also nicht einen vorgegebenen biographischen Statuswechsel, der eindeutig identifizierbar ist wie Geburt, Erwachsenenalter, Heirat oder Tod. In der Taufe wird vielmehr ein neuer Status verliehen, der von außen nicht eindeutig erkennbar ist: Die vom Geist erneuerten und getauften Menschen verhalten sich oft wie die alten Menschen. Die Taufe symbolisiert und stützt nicht einen ohnehin stattfindenden Übergang. Sie produziert ihn. Die von ihr symbolisierte Schaffung des neuen Menschen hat über biographische Dimensionen hinaus eine kosmische Dimension. Es ist daher biographisch irrelevant, wann dieser Übergang im einzelnen Leben stattfindet. Er ist an keinen festen Zeitpunkt gebunden. Denn sein Zeitmaß ist die kosmische Zeit, die durch einen eschatologischen Wandel erneuert wird: Die Welt beginnt noch einmal von vorne. Was in der Taufe symbolisiert wird, reicht daher weit über die alltägliche Welt hinaus. Es ist ein im Glauben und Leben einer Gemeinschaft fundiertes soziales Konstrukt.

Dies konstruktive Element der Taufe, das den neuen Menschen hervorbringt, soll im folgenden anhand unserer drei Religionstypologien näher beschrieben werden. Auch für die Struktur der urchristlichen Religion ist der Übergang zwischen verschiedenen Religionstypen charakteristisch. Sie ist keine reine subkulturelle Kleingruppenreligion, keine reine Erlösungsreligion, keine voll entwickelte Universalreligion, sie ist ein corpus mixtum aus Groß- und Kleingruppenreligion, aus

Versöhnungs- und Erlösungsreligion, aus partikularer Volks- und missionierender Universalreligion. Sie ist eine Religion "im Übergang".

Sofern sie den "neuen Menschen" verwirklichen will und in ihren Riten und Texten die Entstehung des neuen Menschen symbolisch darstellt, verläßt sie die allgemeine Kultur, die ja per definitionem Repräsentant des "alten Menschen" ist. Sie wird zu einer gegenkulturellen Kleingruppenreligion. Bekehrung bedeutet das Verlassen der allgemeinen societas, Eintritt in die kleine Welt der communitas. Aber die Beziehung zur allgemeinen Kultur bleibt erhalten. Das Urchristentum beansprucht nämlich, eben jene Werte zu verwirklichen, die auch die anderen Menschen verwirklichen wollen. Sie will sie sogar noch besser realisieren. Nach dem Matthäusevangelium sucht sie nach der besseren Gerechtigkeit (Matt 5:20), durch die sie Gesetz und Propheten (d.h. die jüdischen Werte) erfüllen will. Paulus mahnt die Christen dazu, "Lichter in der Welt" zu sein, mitten in einem "verdorbenen und verkehrten Geschlecht" (Phil 2:15). Im selben Brief fordert er dazu auf, all das zu verwirklichen, was in dieser angeblich so verdorbenen und verkehrten Welt als "wahrhaftig, ehrbar, gerecht, rein, liebenswert gilt, was einen guten Ruf hat, sei es eine Tugend (ἀρετή), sei es ein Lob" (Phil 4:8). Die subkulturelle Gruppe, die sich gegen die Welt profiliert, soll die Maßstäbe dieser Welt noch besser verwirklichen, als diese es tut! Wir finden daher im Urchristentum zwei Tendenzen, die gegenläufig sind: Bekehrung hin zu einer kleinen Subkultur, die sich abgrenzt von der "verkehrten allgemeinen Kultur", und eine Bekehrung hin zu den besten Werten und Normen dieser Kultur (seien es nun jüdische oder heidnische Werte), um diese in einer Art Konsensüberbietung noch konsequenter vertreten und verwirklichen zu können.[27] Beides gehört zusammen: Um der Konstruktion des *neuen* Menschen eine soziale Plausibilitätsbasis zu geben, ist das Eintauchen in ein gegenkulturelles Milieu notwendig; um aber darin die Verwirklichung des neuen *Menschen* plausibel zu machen, eine Orientierung an der allgemeinen Kultur und ihren Normen und Werten.

[27] W.A. Meeks, *The Origins of Christian Morality. The First Two Centuries* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press 1993), 18–36, hat diese beiden Tendenzen im (Ur-)Christentum klar herausgearbeitet: "The two major ways of construing conversion, as individual moral reform or as a countercultural formation of 'the new human', correspond to two ways of thinking about the formation of a Christian character and two ways the Christian communities related to the world around them. . . . the mind of the sect and the mind of the church struggle on in the history of Christian moral thought and practice" (p. 36).

Das Urchristentum verbindet in vergleichbarer Weise Tendenzen einer Versöhnungs- und Erlösungsreligion. Auf der einen Seite fordert es Bekehrung und Taufe, damit die Menschen aus dieser verkehrten Welt gerettet und Bürger einer neuen Welt werden. Aber dieser rettende Schritt in eine neue Welt, also ein Merkmal von Erlösungsreligion, ist ein Schritt in eine schon jetzt existierende neue Gemeinschaft. Und in dieser Gemeinschaft wird vor allem gefordert, daß man versöhnlich mit den "unerlösten" Schwächen und Verfehlungen der anderen umgeht. Nicht nur sieben, sondern siebenundsiebzigmal soll man seinem Bruder vergeben (Matt 18:21f.). Die Pneumatiker in ihr werden daran gemessen, wie sie mit den Fehlern der anderen umgehen (Gal 6:1ff.). Die Liebe als "Band der Vollkommenheit" (Col 3:14) umfaßt vor allem die Versöhnung mit dem anderen: "Ertrage einer den andern und vergebt euch untereinander, wenn jemand Klage hat gegen den andern; wie der Herr euch vergeben hat, so vergebt auch ihr!" (Col 3:13). Das Gemeinschaftsleben wird intensiviert, und damit rückt ein Anliegen jeder Versöhnungsreligion ins Zentrum: Die Friedens- und Kooperationsfähigkeit der Menschen untereinander. Erlösung wird gedeutet als Befreiung zu Kooperationsfähigkeit, die Befreiung von Sünde, Sarx und Tod als Befähigung zu prosozialem Verhalten. Paulus hat das im Galaterbrief auf den Begriff gebracht: "Ihr aber, liebe Brüder, seid zur Freiheit berufen. Allein seht zu, daß ihr durch die Freiheit nicht dem Fleisch Raum gebt; sondern durch die Liebe diene einer dem andern . . ." (Gal 5:13). Die Überwindung des Unheilszustands geschieht also nicht der individuellen Erlösung wegen, sondern um Menschen in neuer Weise gemeinschaftsfähig zu machen. Glauben, Liebe, Hoffnung gelten als oberste Werte, aber die Liebe ist größer als alle anderen. Nur sie bleibt bis in alle Ewigkeit (1 Cor 13:13). Wieder kann man sagen: Um der Konstruktion des *neuen* Menschen willen werden erlösungsreligiöse Elemente verstärkt, um der Verwirklichung des neuen *Menschen* willen versöhnungsreligiöse Elemente intensiviert.

Schließlich verbindet das Urchristentum auch Züge einer Volks- und einer Universalreligion. In einer Volksreligion wird die Religionsgemeinschaft durch Geburt gebildet. Zugehörig sind alle Stammesangehörigen, alle Israeliten, alle Athener usw. Die physische Geburt muß freilich sozial gedeutet werden—u.a. durch einen gemeinsamen Erzählschatz, der jedem und jeder sagt, was es heißt, Sohn oder Tochter Abrahams zu sein. Sie muß sozial legitimiert werden durch Riten, die das Faktum der Geburt in die von allen akzeptierte

symbolische Welt hineinholt, z.B. durch Beschneidung. Sie muß immer wieder erneuert werden durch gemeinsame Opfer und Opfermahlzeiten. Kurz: Gemeinsame physische Geburt muß sozial "re-konstruiert" oder "nachgebildet" werden, damit sie zur Verwandtschaft wird, die Handeln und Erleben bestimmt. Das Urchristentum vollzog den Schritt zu einer Gemeinschaft, die sich nicht mehr durch physische Herkunft konstituierte, sondern ausschließlich durch Glauben, d.h. den freiwilligen Anschluß an eine Offenbarer- und Mittlergestalt. In dieser Gemeinschaft will sie eine herkunftsunabhängige, universale Religion sein, die Frieden und Kooperationsfähigkeit unter Menschen ganz verschiedener Abstammung herstellen und gegen menschliche Ausartungsbereitschaft sichern will. Die Verwandtschaft der Glieder kann hier nicht sozial *re*-konstruiert werden, sie muß sozial *neu* konstruiert werden—nicht anknüpfend an vorgegebene physische Verwandtschaft, sondern gegen vorgegebene Verschiedenheiten. Die symbolische Deutung wird nicht einem "realen" Sachverhalt nachgebildet. Sie geht ihm voraus—und soll eine neue Realität schaffen.

Die Taufe, die zum Kind Gottes macht und damit eine "geistliche Wiedergeburt" symbolisiert, tritt daher im Urchristentum an die Stelle der physischen Geburt. Oder anders ausgedrückt: Die soziale Konstruktion der Verwandtschaft, die in den traditionellen Versöhnungsreligionen eine vorgegebene Gemeinsamkeit ergänzt, wird zur alleinigen Basis der Verwandtschaft. Gleichzeitig soll die Zugehörigkeit zur Gemeinschaft aber im Prinzip so irreversibel und unantastbar sein wie die Zugehörigkeit zu einer "natürlichen" Gemeinschaft. Sie soll unverfügbar sein, damit sie auch in Belastungssituationen Handeln und Erleben von Menschen bestimmt. Dem dient die Geburts- und Lebensmetaphorik, die mehr als ein "Bild" ist, sondern im Glauben der Gemeinde eine geheimnisvolle, überlegene und höhere Realität darstellt. Die durch Wiedergeburt gestiftete höhere Verwandtschaft gilt als genauso unverfügbar und vorgegeben wie die natürliche Verwandtschaft. Obwohl allen bewußt ist, daß sie auf einem Willensakt des Menschen basiert, wird sie zugleich als "Erwählung", "Berufung", kurz als ein unverfügbares Handeln Gottes gedeutet. Das religiöse Ritual schafft hier durch soziale Konstruktion einen neuen Status, der von der Gemeinschaft nicht mehr in Frage gestellt werden kann. Die neuen Mitglieder sind "Brüder" und "Schwestern", obwohl sie nicht genetisch, sondern nur geistlich durch Wiedergeburt aus Gott verwandt sind.

Auf einer höheren Ebene bleiben somit einige Grundstrukturen einer

"Volksreligion" erhalten: Auch die Zugehörigkeit zur christlichen Gemeinschaft basiert auf einer Vorgegebenheit, die so unverfügbar ist wie die eigene (physische) Geburt: auf der vorhergehenden Entscheidung Gottes und auf seiner Prädestination zum Heil. Alle Riten und Texte re-konstruieren im Grunde dieses absolut vorgegebene Faktum. Die Verwandlung des Menschen in einen neuen Menschen ist Sichtbarmachung und Nachvollzug einer vorherigen Entscheidung Gottes: Gott hat einige Menschen "vorherbestimmt, daß sie gleich sein sollen dem Bild seines Sohnes, damit dieser der Erstgeborene sei unter vielen Brüdern . . ." (Rom 8:29). Die Gleichgestalt mit dem Bild Jesu aber ist wiederhergestellte Gottebenbildlichkeit. Alle Menschen sind von der Schöpfung her Gottes Ebenbild. Aber nach urchristlicher Vorstellung wurde diese Ebenbildlichkeit beschädigt. Sie wird nun wiederhergestellt. Der erneuerte Mensch ist eine "neue Kreatur" (Gal 6:15; 2 Cor 5:17). Er ist dazu bestimmt, Ebenbild Christi und Gottes zu werden. Das heißt: Auch die urchristliche Taufe konstruiert nicht einen völlig neuen Menschen. Sie re-konstruiert etwas, das allem rituellen Handeln vorgegeben ist: die Bestimmung zur Gottebenbildlichkeit. Wieder kann man sagen: Sofern die urchristliche Taufe die Konstruktion eines *neuen* Menschen darstellt, macht sie alle Menschen in einer über die bisherige Natur hinausgehenden Weise zu neuen Geschwistern. Sofern sie aber den neuen *Menschen* symbolisch darstellt, re-konstruiert sie die ursprüngliche Schöpfung.

Exkurs: Wissenssoziologische Überlegungen zur sozialen Konstruktion des neuen Menschen durch die Taufe

Daß der rituelle Wandel und die Entstehung der urchristlichen Taufe mit einem Strukturwandel der Religion zusammenhängen, ist hoffentlich deutlich geworden. Darüber hinaus stellt sich die Frage, ob der allgemeine religiöse Strukturwandel mit einem sozialen Strukturwandel in der ganzen Gesellschaft zusammenhing. Konkret: Gab es einen Zusammenhang zwischen sozialer Mobilität und religiöser Statusveränderung, wie sie in der Taufe rituell symbolisiert wurde?

Nun wäre die Entstehung eines neuen Ritus in einer verschwindenden religiösen Subkultur des Römischen Reiches ganz gewiß kein notwendiger oder gar hinreichender Grund, um solch einen Zusammenhang anzunehmen. Tatsache ist aber, daß in ihrer sozialen Funktion vergleichbare Initiationsriten in nichtoffiziellen Kulten damals an Bedeutung zunehmen: Das 2.–4. Jh. n.Chr. ist eine Blütezeit der Mysterienreligionen. Das Urchristentum gehört in den Zusammenhang einer Zunahme privater Religiosität, die sich in Vereinen und subkulturellen Nischen organisiert. Menschen erstreben damals in erhöhtem Maße auf indivi-

duellem Wege (d.h. aufgrund persönlicher Entscheidung für einen bestimmten Kult, in den sie sich "einweihen" lassen) eine Verbesserung ihres Heilsstatus in diesem oder im zukünftigen Leben an. Mit großem Aufwand inszenierte Einweihungsriten symbolisieren den errungenen Statuswechsel. In den Metamorphosen des Apuleius wird mit der Einweihung in die Isisreligion sogar die (Rück-)Verwandlung des Helden vom Tier in einen Menschen besiegelt. Es muß ein gesamtgesellschaftlich bedingtes und gesamtgesellschaftlich verbreitetes Bedürfnis nach religiös symbolisierter Statusverbesserung gegeben haben. Die ersten Christen standen in dieser Hinsicht nicht isoliert da. Charakteristisch für sie ist, daß sie den erhofften Statuswechsel mit sehr bescheidenen Mitteln "inszenierten". Verglichen mit anderen Initiationsriten (die zudem eine Menge Geld kosteten), war die Taufe ein schlichter Ritus. Er war allen zugänglich. Geld spielte keine Rolle.

Für die Prinzipatszeit kann man Indizien für einen begrenzten Anstieg sozialer Mobilität sammeln. Diese soziale Mobilität ist mit der Dynamik einer modernen Gesellschaft nicht zu vergleichen. Zwei Merkmale zeichnen sie aus: (1.) Sie geschieht generationsübergreifend. Der Sklave kann auf seine Freilassung hoffen, der Freigelassene darauf, daß sein Sohn den Status des freien Bürgers erlangt. Der Aufstieg geschieht langsam, der Abstieg oft jäh und plötzlich. (2.) Gesellschaftlicher Aufstieg ist an ein Patron-Klient-Verhältnis gebunden. Persönliches Fortkommen wird der Loyalität gegenüber einem Herrn verdankt.

Die Taufe und Bekehrung bot antiken Menschen in dieser Situation etwas sehr Verlockendes: Sie versprach eine eschatologische Statuserhöhung, die durch nichts mehr überboten werden konnte, und das auf einen Schlag. Wer durch die Taufe zum "Kind Gottes" geworden war und in die Gleichgestalt seines Sohnes verwandelt war, konnte coram Deo keinen höheren Status erwarten. Er konnte nur hoffen, daß sich der ihm zugesprochene Status einmal öffentlich sichtbar erweisen werde. Um diese religiöse Statusveränderung zu erreichen, bedurfte es nur der Loyalität gegenüber einem Herrn: dem KYRIOS Jesus Christus, der über allen anderen Herren stand. Treue ihm gegenüber verlieh das Heil.

Man kann weiter fragen, wie der Zusammenhang zwischen den allgemeinen sozialen Mobilitätsprozessen und den rituell und religiös inszenierten Statusverbesserungen vorzustellen sei: Gab es eine Parallelität zwischen beiden? Oder sollte der religiöse Statuswechsel Defizite der gesellschaftlichen Realität kompensieren? Wahrscheinlich ist beides richtig: Die zaghaft zunehmende Mobilität in der Realität mußte Träume und Aspirationen wecken, die durch die Realität nicht erfüllt werden konnten. Die religiös inszenierten Statusveränderungen wurden durch sie inspiriert und wirkten auf die Realität zurück: teils als Ansporn, auch in der alltäglichen Realität über den status quo hinauszugelangen, teils als Trost dafür, daß die Realität allen Wünschen harte Grenzen setzt. Daher finden wir sowohl in der sozialen Realität wie in der religiösen Imagination beides: Aufbrüche an Mobilität und retar-

dierende Kräfte. Auch das Urchristentum weckt einerseits Erwartungen auf Verbesserung des Heilszustands, betont aber andererseits immer wieder: Was den Christen schon jetzt verheißen und zugesprochen ist, ist doch noch nicht voll realisiert. Neben dem Indikativ eines endgültigen Heilsstatus steht der Imperativ von Forderungen, die dazu aufrufen, ihn zu erlangen. In der sozialen Realität war es nicht viel anders. Es verbreitet sich wohl eine Einsicht, daß alle Menschen, auch Sklaven, gleichberechtigte Mitmenschen sind – aber von einer Realisierung solcher Erkenntnisse im Alltag war man weit entfernt. In verschiedener Gestalt durchzieht wohl jede Gesellschaft diese Spannung zwischen gleicher Statuszuweisung an alle und hierarchieorientierter Praxis. Der neue Mensch, der die Unterschiede zwischen Völkern, Klassen und Geschlechtern überwunden hat, war ein soziales Konstrukt, das der Wirklichkeit vorauseilte. Aber es war eine religiöse Wirklichkeit, die in den Gemeinden sozial wirksam werden konnte. Es war mehr als ein Wunschtraum. Es war nichts anderes als der Wille Gottes, den Menschen wohl leugnen, aber den sie nicht zunichte machen können.

Fassen wir zusammen: Im Urchristentum wird in kleinen subkulturellen Gemeinschaften aufgrund gemeinsamen Glaubens ein intensives Bewußtsein von Zusammengehörigkeit erzeugt, um Menschen mit Hilfe von Riten und Symbolen kooperationsfähig zu machen. Die unvermeidliche subkulturelle Verengung steht in Spannung zur Orientierung an der allgemeinen Kultur, deren Konsens man überbieten will. Der die Natur verwandelnde Erlösungsgedanke steht in Spannung zur Versöhnung mit Menschen in ihrer "unerlösten" Fehlerhaftigkeit. Die universale Offenheit des neuen Menschen soll im Grunde nur Wiederherstellung der Schöpfung sein. Im Konflikt mit Marcion und der Gnosis wird sich das Urchristentum dessen bewußt, daß es mit dem Festhalten am Schöpfungsgedanken das Erbe seiner Mutterreligion festhält: Die von ihm ererbten Strukturen einer Volks- und Versöhnungsreligion, die gegenüber subkulturellen Verengungen spröde ist, haben es davor bewahrt, sich in eine radikale Erlösungsreligion zu verwandeln: Die Gnosis, eine radikale erlösungsreligiöse Neudeutung des Christentums, war eine große Versuchung, wurde aber überwunden.[28]

[28] Das Urchristentum ist also nicht eindeutig einer der vorgeschlagenen Religionstypen zuzuordnen, sondern Ausdruck eines Übergangs, der in den kanonischen Texten des Christentums, dem Neuen Testament (in Verbindung mit dem Alten Testament), festgeschrieben wurde. Diese "Übergangsbewegung" war insgesamt von jener "Liminalität" oder "Schwellenexistenz" bestimmt, die V. Turner im Ritual dargestellt fand (vgl. oben Anm. 1). Die Kanonisierung von "Schwellenexistenztexten" hat etwas davon für die ganze Christentumsgeschichte erhalten.

In einem Tauftext im Galaterbrief klingen viele der besprochenen Motive an: ein subkulturelles Einheitsbewußtsein, die Sehnsucht nach erlösungsreligiöser Verwandlung, die universale Offenheit für alle Menschen jenseits traditioneller Trennungen. Taufe bedeutet hier Konstruktion einer neuen Verwandtschaft jenseits der natürlichen Herkunft. Denn alle Getauften werden durch ihren Glauben zu Kindern Abrahams, obwohl sie physisch nicht von ihm abstammen. Und als Kinder Abrahams sollen sie untereinander eins sein wie eine einzige Person. Darin verwirklichen sie die Ebenbildlichkeit von der Schöpfung her. Dieser Tauftext sei abschließend noch einmal zitiert:

"Denn ihr seid alle durch den Glauben Gottes Kinder in Christus Jesus. Denn ihr alle, die ihr auf Christus getauft seid, habt Christus angezogen. Hier ist nicht Jude noch Grieche, hier ist nicht Sklave noch Freier, hier ist nicht Mann noch Frau; denn ihr seid allesamt einer in Christus Jesus. Gehört ihr aber Christus an, so seid ihr ja Abrahams Kinder und nach der Verheißung Erben" (Gal 3:26–29).

Ein solcher fast enthusiastisch klingender Text wirft freilich die Frage auf: Können real existierende Menschen auf der Ebene einer sozial konstruierten neuen Verwandtschaft wirklich zu Frieden und Kooperation untereinander gelangen? Wie bewältigen sie ihren Unfrieden? Das führt zum zweiten Beitrag zur urchristlichen Taufe und Bekehrung.

DIE URCHRISTLICHE TAUFE UND DER UMGANG MIT DEN AFFEKTEN

PETRA VON GEMÜNDEN

A *Einleitung: Die Taufe als psychische Neustrukturierung des Menschen*

Im Urchristentum ist der Traum von einem "neuen Menschen" lebendig. Die in Christus lebenden sind eine "neue Kreatur" (Gal 6:15; 2 Cor 5:17). Dieser Traum wurde freilich nicht nur geträumt, sondern rituell inszeniert. Der neue Mensch wurde durch die Bekehrung und deren Ritualisierung in der Taufe geschaffen.[1] Mit dem Konversionsritus der urchristlichen Taufe sind dabei zwei wichtige Neustrukturierungen verbunden: Eine soziale und eine individuelle (psychische und moralische) Verwandlung des menschlichen Lebens: So führt die urchristliche Taufe in sozialer Hinsicht Menschen unterschiedlichster Herkunft zu einer neuen Gemeinschaft zusammen, die den neuen Status von Brüdern und Schwestern in Christi erhalten: Durch den Ritus der Taufe werden sie in den Leib Christi integriert. Gleichzeitig markiert die urchristliche Taufe für jeden einzelnen individuell den radikalen Bruch mit dem alten Leben und den Beginn eines neuen Lebens: in der Taufe hat der Mensch den alten Menschen aus- und den neuen Menschen angezogen. Dieser Übergang zum neuen Leben ist bei Paulus, den Deuteropaulinen und in den Petrusbriefen eng mit dem Problem der Affekte verknüpft: Die Taufe bedeutet eine *Neustrukturierung* der Affektbewältigung.

Die soziale und die psychische Dimension des neuen Lebens, dessen Anfangspunkt die Taufe darstellt, dürften sich in ihrer Bedeutung gegenseitig verstärken, denn die herkunfts- und schichtenunabhängige Zusammensetzung der christlichen Gemeinschaft, die in sich unterschiedliche Kulturen integrieren muß, erhöht die Gefahr potentieller Spannungen und nötigt zu gesteigerter Affektbewältigung. Die Verbindung von Taufe und Affektbewältigung sei zunächst an

[1] W.A. Meeks, *The Origins of Christian Morality. The First Two Centuries* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1993), 32-33: "Ritualizing Conversion".

einigen Beispielen illustriert. Diese Beispiele veranschaulichen jeweils ein Merkmal der neuentstehenden urchristlichen Religion.

1.) Der Kolosserbrief spricht Col 2:11ff. explizit von der Taufe und verbindet mir ihr einen tiefgreifenden Wandel des Menschen.[2] Col 3 nimmt die mit der Taufe verbundene Metaphorik des Sterbens und des Auferstehens auf und führt in Col 3:5–11 aus:

> Tötet also die Glieder, die zur Erde gehören: Unzucht, Unreinheit, Leidenschaft (πάθος), böse Gier (ἐπιθυμίαν κακήν) und die Habsucht (τὴν πλεονεξίαν), die ein Götzendienst ist;[3] . . . Auch ihr habt darin einst euren Lebenswandel geführt, als ihr unter diesen lebtet. Jetzt aber legt auch ihr das alles ab: Zorn, Wut, Bosheit, Lästerung, schmutzige Rede aus eurem Munde—Belügt einander nicht—, indem ihr den alten Menschen mitsamt seinen Taten auszieht und den neuen anzieht, der sich erneuert zur Erkenntnis gemäß dem Bild dessen, der ihn erschaffen hat: "Da gibt es nicht (mehr) Grieche und Jude, Beschneidung und Vorhaut, Barbar, Skythe, Sklave, Freier, sondern alles und in allen: Christus".[4]

Zwei Lasterkataloge, der erste mit überwiegend sexuellen, der zweite mit überwiegend aggressiven Lastern beschreiben das zu überwindende "Einst". Zwar gehen die beiden Lasterkataloge über das hinaus, was die Antike "Affekte" nennt—nur mit πάθος, ἐπιθυμία, ὀργή und θυμός sind explizit Affekte aufgezählt, die sich auch in antiken Affektenlehren finden. Doch zeigt ein Blick auf Gal 5:24, daß die Affekte, genauer die παθήματα und ἐπιθυμίαι, als Metabegriff für die Laster, die das "Einst" bestimmen, fungieren können. Die Bedeutung, die der psychischen Umstrukturierung aufgrund der sozialen Neukonstruktion der Glaubensgemeinschaft zukommt, wird in Col 3:11 explizit angesprochen: Die Formulierung ist eine traditionsgeschichtliche Variante von Gal 3:26–28: "Da gibt es nicht (mehr) Grieche und Jude, Beschneidung und Vorhaut, Barbar, Skythe, Sklave, Freier, sondern alles und in allen: Christus".[5] Die *universale* Tendenz dieser Aussagen ist unverkennbar.

2.) Der Epheserbrief basiert auf dem Kolosserbrief. Eph 2 nimmt in einem ersten Teil (2:1–10) die mit der Taufe verbundene Kontra-

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[2] Die Formulierung Col 3:13 καὶ ὑμᾶς νεκροὺς ὄντας ἐν . . . τῇ ἀκροβυστίᾳ τῆς σαρκός zeigt, daß es sich um Heiden handelt, die zum Christentum konvertiert sind.

[3] Dieser fünfgliedrige Katalog entstammt der Tradition. Wahrscheinlich ist er aus der iranischen Religion und soll die Ganzheit des Menschen beschreiben (A. Lindemann, *Der Kolosserbrief* [ZBK NT 10; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 1983], 55).

[4] Übersetzung: A. Lindemann, Kol, 54–55.

[5] Übersetzung: A. Lindemann, Kol, 54–55.

stierung von Tod und Leben auf und stellt dem "Einst" der vorchristlichen Existenz das "Jetzt" der gläubigen Existenz entgegen.[6] Erstere wird als Aufenthalt in den Begierden des Fleisches charakterisiert, in dem der Mensch "die befehlenden Wünsche des Fleisches und der Sinne" (2:3) erfüllt, letztere zeichnet sich durch gute Werke in Christus aus.

Die Charakterisierung der vorchristlichen Existenz als affektbestimmt bestätigt ein Blick auf Eph 4: Hier wird der grundlegende Wechsel im Leben des Christen im Bild des alten und des neuen Menschen variiert: "Legt von euch ab den alten Menschen mit seinem früheren Wandel, der sich durch trügerische Begierden zugrunde richtet. Erneuert euch aber in eurem Geist und Sinn und zieht den neuen Menschen an, der nach Gott geschaffen ist . . ." (Eph 4:22–24).[7] In den folgenden Präzisionen wird der Zorn (ὀργή, Eph 4:(26).31) und der θυμός (4:31)[8] aufgeführt und werden prosoziale Tugenden betont. Dabei lassen sich im Epheserbrief als Grundwerte "Liebe" (Eph 1:4.15; 2:4; 3:17, u.ö.), "Einheit" (Eph 4:3–6.13) und "Frieden" (Eph 2:14–18; 4:3; 6:15) erkennen. Ziel ist die *Versöhnung* der Menschen untereinander, die Überwindung der Feindschaft vor allem zwischen Juden und Heiden. Die soziale Neustrukturierung der christlichen Gemeinschaft wird hier deutlich reflektiert—der Bezug der Taufe zum grundlegenden Wechsel von affektbestimmter vorchristlicher zur christlichen Existenz legt sich durch den Kontext und die Topik/Metaphorik nahe, ist aber nicht explizit.

> Derselbe Zusammenhang zwischen Affektbewältigung und Taufe wird im Titusbrief deutlich: Titus 3:3 beschreibt die frühere Existenz (ποτέ)

[6] Der Abschnitt erwähnt die Taufe nicht explizit. Doch ein Blick auf Col 2:12 ("Gestorben mit ihm in der Taufe . . . auferweckt durch den Glauben") und Rom 6:2 sowie das kontrastierende ποτέ—νῦν lassen erkennen, daß der Verfasser an die Taufe denkt (so F. Mußner, *Der Brief an die Epheser* [ÖTK 10; Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn; Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1982], 62; P. Pokorný, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Epheser* [ThHK 10/II; Leipzig: Theologische Verlagsanstalt, 1992], 96; anders A. Lindemann, *Paulus im ältesten Christentum: Das Bild des Apostels und die Rezeption der paulinischen Theologie in der frühchristlichen Literatur bis Marcion* [BHTh 58; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1979], 124; A. Lindemann, *Der Epheserbrief* [ZBK NT 8; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1985], 40: Der Verfasser des Epheserbriefes habe die Bezugnahme auf die Taufe bewußt gestrichen).

[7] Die Rede vom alten und neuen Menschen zusammen mit dem Bild vom An- und Ausziehen verweist auf den Kontext der Taufe. P. Pokorný, Epheser, 188, denkt an Neophytenparänese.

[8] Vgl. Col 3:8, die Vorlage zu Eph 4:31. In Eph 4:19 wird die Lebenseinstellung der Heiden als ἀσέλγεια, Zügellosigkeit, charakterisiert und mit πλεονεξία, Habsucht, verbunden.

> "... wir waren Sklaven aller möglicher Begierden und Leidenschaften (ἐπιθυμίαις καὶ ἡδοναῖς), lebten in Bosheit und Neid (ἐν ... φθόνῳ), waren verhaßt und haßten einander". Die Rettung Christi wird dem Menschen durch die Taufe, "das Bad der Wiedergeburt und Erneuerung im Heiligen Geist", zuteil. Individuelle und soziale Dimension gehen in Titus 3:3b Hand in Hand.[9]

3.) In 1 Pet 1:14–15 wird die Anpassung an die Begierden in der "Zeit der Unwissenheit" der Adressaten, der Angleichung an Gott, "an den Heiligen, der euch berufen hat", entgegengestellt. Die das frühere Leben bestimmenden ἐπιθυμίαι werden mit dem heiligen Leben kontrastiert, das in V.13 mit Nüchternheit umschrieben wird.[10] Die Metaphorik der neuen Zeugung in 1 Pet 1:3.23 (vgl. auch 2:2) legt es nahe, daß der Verfasser die Taufe im Auge hat und folglich die ἐπιθυμίαι die praebaptismale Existenz charakterisieren.[11] Von daher sollen die ἀγαπητοί, die Christen, sich der σαρκικῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν enthalten, die gegen die Seele kämpfen (1 Pet 2:11). Auch im 4. Kapitel des 1. Petrusbriefes werden die ἐπιθυμίαι dem heidnischen Leben zugeordnet: sie sind der Ausrichtung auf den Willen Gottes entgegengesetzt (4:2) und kennzeichnen die vergangene Zeit, in der die Adressaten nach dem Willen der Heiden gelebt haben.[12] Die Gegenüberstellung der vergangenen Zeit und der hiesigen Lebenszeit wie der Kontext, in dem explizit jetzt auch von der Taufe die Rede ist (3:21), legen es nahe, daß die Überwindung der Affektorientierung mit der Taufe verbunden ist. Die Neuorientierung[13] hat einerseits

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[9] Möglicherweise finden wir auch in 1 Tim 6:3–16—ebenfalls in den Tritopaulinen—einen Zusammenhang zwischen ἐπιθυμία (und φιλαργυρία) und der Taufe—vorausgesetzt, die ὁμολογία vor Zeugen meint das Taufbekenntnis, so J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972), 42, vgl. S. 20 und 26; andere denken jedoch eher an ein Ordinationsgelübde, so z.B. E. Lohse, *Die Ordination im Spätjudentum und im Neuen Testament* (Göttingen: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1951), 85–86.

[10] νήφω läßt an "asketische Abstinenz oder Selbstdisziplin" denken (N. Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, [EKK XXI; Zürich, Braunschweig: Benziger Verlag, 1989³], 75).

[11] Der kleine Lasterkatalog von 1 Pet 2:1 zählt auch einen Affekt, den φθόνος, den Neid, auf, der "abzulegen" ist (möglicherweise verweist das Verb "ablegen" (ἀποτίθημι) wiederum auf das Ablegen der Kleider bei der Taufe, so B. Reicke, *The Epistle of James, Peter, and Jude, Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (The Anchor Bible; Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1964), S. 89, was—legt man die Ritualtheorie V. Turners zugrunde einer imperativischen paränetischen Verwendung dieses Motivs für die Gegenwart nicht zu widersprechen braucht).

[12] 1 Pet 1:14 spricht von der "Zeit der Unwissenheit".

[13] Vgl. die wiederholten Mahnungen, sich nicht anzupassen, sich von der ἐπιθυμία abzuwenden: 1:14 (μὴ συσχηματιζόμενοι ταῖς ... ἐπιθυμίαις); 2:11 (παρακαλῶ ... ἀπέχεσθαι τῶν σαρκικῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν); 4:2 (μηκέτι ἀνθρώπων ἐπιθυμίαις ... βιῶσαι).

eine Distanzierung, ja Isolierung von der Umwelt zur Folge, die diese mit Befremden wahrnimmt (1 Pet 4:4), andrerseits erhöht sie den Zusammenhalt[14] und das Selbstbewußtsein der christlichen Binnengruppe.[15] Deutlicher noch als im Kolosser- und Epheserbrief tritt uns im 1. Petrusbrief der *subkulturelle* Zug der neuen Religion entgegen: Sie muss sich in einer diskriminierenden Umwelt und oft gegen sie entfalten.

Die ausgewählten Texte lassen drei Merkmale des Urchristentums hervortreten: Die Bedeutung der sozialen und psychischen Neustrukturierung, die mit der Taufe verbunden ist, hängt eng damit zusammen, daß sich das Heidenchristentum (1.) aufgrund einer Abkehr vom bisherigen Norm- und Interpretationssystem konstituiert: Es bildet eine *subkulturelle* Gruppe von "Aussteigern" aus der normalen Lebensweise (besonders deutlich im 1. Petrusbrief). In dieser Gruppe kommt es (2.) zu einer Neustrukturierung der sozialen Bezüge. Sie öffnet sich allen Menschen unabhängig von ihrer ethnischen und kulturellen Herkunft und hat dadurch—trotz der gegenkulturellen Abgrenzung zur Umwelt—einen *universalen* Zug (besonders deutlich im Kolosserbrief). Hinzu kommt (3.) als letzter Punkt: Der christlichen Referenzgemeinschaft und damit dem Verhalten eines jeden einzelnen in der Gemeinschaft, seinem Umgang mit seinen Affekten kommt enorme Bedeutung zu: Die antisozialen Affekte sollen durch prosoziale Einstellungen ersetzt werden, durch Liebe, Versöhnung und Überwindung von gegenseitigem Haß (so besonders deutlich im Epheser- und Titusbrief). In den allgemeinen Kategorien verschiedener Religionstypologien ausgedrückt:[16] Das Heidenchristentum paulinischer Tradition läßt sich strukturell als subkulturelle Minderheitsreligion mit universalen Zügen und als eine Versöhnungsreligion mit erlösungsreligiösen Elementen charakterisieren.

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[14] Vgl. die Aufforderung zu φιλαδελφία (1:22) und brüderlicher ἀγάπη (1 Pet 1:22; 2:17; 3:8; 4:8–9; 5:14).

[15] Zum Zusammenhang zwischen gesellschaftlicher Fremdheit/Entfremdung und christlichem Selbstverständnis vgl. R. Feldmeier, *Die Christen als Fremde: Die Metapher der Fremde in der antiken Welt, im Urchristentum und im 1. Petrusbrief* (WUNT 64; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1992), 169–170. 2 Pet 1:4 wird die die Welt regierende ἐπιθυμία dem Anteil an der göttlichen Natur entgegengestellt. Als Konsequenz daraus werden ἀρετή, γνῶσις, ἐγκράτεια, ὑπομονή, εὐσέβεια, φιλαδελφία und ἀγάπη angemahnt und wird in V.9 deutlich an die Taufe erinnert (λαβὼν τοῦ καθαρισμοῦ τῶν πάλαι αὐτοῦ ἁμαρτιῶν).

[16] Vgl. G. Theißen, "Die urchristliche Taufe und die soziale Konstruktion des neuen Menschen", siehe oben, 90–94.

Diese drei Strukturmerkmale des Urchristentums sind, wie wir gesehen haben, in unseren Texten durchgehend mit dem Thema der Affektüberwindung verbunden. Die Entstehung des neuen Menschen hat also im Bewußtsein des Urchristentums nicht nur eine soziale, sondern auch eine psychische Dimension. Nachdem der Beitrag von G. Theißen die soziale Dimension thematisiert hat, will sich der vorliegende Beitrag der psychischen Dimension zuwenden: Dem Umgang des Menschen mit seinen Affekten. Die Bedeutung, die diesem Thema im Urchristentum eingeräumt wird, hat seine Entsprechung in der antiken Umwelt: Die zahlreichen Veröffentlichungen mit dem Titel περὶ παθῶν oder das "de ira" von Seneca zeigen, daß die Affekte und ihre Kontrolle ein zentrales Thema in der Antike waren.[17]

Jedoch wird die Affektkontrolle in der Antike durchgängig unabhängig von einem einmaligen religiösen Ritus gefordert.[18] Während die religiösen Riten im griechisch-römischen Raum ein gutes und heilvolles Verhältnis zur Gottheit herstellen sollen[19] und nicht mit der Aufgabe der Affektkontrolle verbunden sind, hat letztere im griechisch-römischen Raum ihren Ort in philosophischen Kreisen, und hier besonders bei Stoikern und Kynikern. Nun fällt auf, daß Gustave Bardy den Religionen des griechisch-römischen Raums die Vorstellung einer Konversion, besonders als "changement intérieur",[20] das den Göttern für die Zukunft "une existence meilleure"[21] verspricht, abspricht, diese jedoch bei den Philosophen finden will. Wir finden also auf der einen Seite Riten ohne eine innere Verwandlung der Lebensführung (in den Religionen) und—auf der anderen Seite—die Vorstellung einer solchen Verwandlung ohne Ritual (in der Philosophie).

Ein Blick auf das hellenistische Judentum bestätigt das. Auch hier findet sich das Thema der Affektkontrolle: Im 4. Makkabäerbuch und bei Philo von Alexandrien ist es zentral, aber—abgesehen von weni-

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[17] Vgl. A. Vögtle, "Affekt," in: *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* I, ed. Th. Klauser (Stuttgart: Hiersemann Verlags-G.M.B.H. 1950), 160–173, hier: 161–162.

[18] Ob die (teilweise wiederholbaren) Einweihungen der Mysterienreligionen mit ethischen Forderungen verbunden waren, ist fraglich (vgl. G. Barth, *Die Taufe in frühchristlicher Zeit*, [Biblisch-theologische Studien 4; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981], 87). Apuleius, *Metam.* XI.6.5; 15.5; 19.3 ist von einer Verpflichtung des Mysten die Rede. Es ist leicht möglich, daß sich diese Verpflichtung auf kultisch-rituelle Observanzen beschränkt (vgl. G. Barth, 87 n. 196).

[19] G. Bardy, *La conversion au christianisme durant les premiers siècles* (Théologie 15; Paris: Aubier, 1949), 18–30.

[20] G. Bardy, 18.

[21] G. Bardy, 30.

gen Ausnahmen[22] mit keinem Ritus verbunden. Im Neuen Testament schließlich findet sich das Thema der Affektkontrolle dagegen oft in Verbindung mit der Taufe[23] wie die eingangs zitierten Texte aus der Paulustradition gezeigt haben.

Der Textbefund legt nahe, daß wir im Christentum (paulinischer Prägung) eine Neukombination vorfinden: Hier wird zum ersten Mal ein Ritus mit dem Thema der Affektkontrolle verbunden.

Während nun das 4. Makkabäerbuch und Philo von Alexandrien bei ihrem religiösen Konzept der Affektkontrolle innerhalb ein- und desselben Interpretations- und Lebenszusammenhangs verbleiben, beobachten wir im urchristlichen Kontext einen grundlegenden Wechsel von einem Norm-, Interpretations- und Lebenszusammenhang in einen anderen: Bekehrung und Taufe sind eine Wiedergeburt des Menschen, eine neue Situation des Menschen.

Um die Änderung zu erhellen, die durch die Kombination der Affektkontrolle mit dem Ritus der Wiedergeburtstaufe im Urchristentum erfolgt ist, werde ich mich im folgenden in einem ersten Teil diesen beiden system*immanenten* Lösungsmustern der Affektbewältigung ohne Ritual zuwenden, nämlich der Affektbewältigung im 4. Makkabäerbuch (1.1.), und der Affektbewältigung bei Philo von Alexandrien (1.2.). Nach diesem Blick auf das hellenistische Judentum will ich mich in einem zweiten Teil (2.) den paulinischen Briefen zuwenden, die ein system*transzendierendes* Lösungsmuster der Affektbewältigung eng mit einem Ritual verbinden. In einem letzten Teil (C) wird die Verbindung von Affektkontrolle und dem Ritus der Wiedergeburtstaufe im Blick auf die Umwelt als Neukombination profiliert und nach den Gründen für einen (expliziten) Rekurs auf

[22] Im *4 Macc.* kann die Einhaltung des jüdischen Ritualgesetzes (der Speisegesetze!) als Ausdruck der Affektkontrolle interpretiert werden. Philo deutet in *Migr.* 92 die Beschneidung auf die Affektkontrolle: "Auch weil die Beschneidung darauf hinweist, daß wir alle Lust und Begierde aus uns 'herausschneiden' sollen und gottlosen Wahn entfernen müssen ... Dürfen wir nicht das über sie gegebene Gesetz aufheben" (*Migr.* 92, vgl. *Spec Leg.* 9–10; die Zitate aus Philo von Alexandrien folgen der Ausgabe: *Die Werke in deutscher Übersetzung*, eds. L. Cohn *et al.* [Berlin: de Gruyter, 1962²]). Es handelt sich bei den jüdischen Speisegesetzen jedoch nicht um einen rite de passage, sondern um einen jüdischen identity marker. Die Beschneidung ist einmal ein rite de passage und bleibt das Leben lang ein jüdischer identity marker.

[23] Rom 6; Col 2 und 3; Titus 3. Ohne explizite Verbindung in Mark 7: 21–23, Jas 1:14-15.19–21, Jas 3 (bes. 14–15) und Jas 4. In Gal 5:16ff.; Eph 2 und 4; im 1. Petrusbrief und in Jas 1:14.15.19–21 ist die Taufe zwar nicht explizit erwähnt, legt sich aber durch das Kontrastschema und die Metaphorik nahe.

die Taufe gefragt werden. Dabei wird deutlich werden, daß die individuelle, psychische Dimension in die soziale eingebettet ist und beide aufeinander bezogen sind.

B *Unterschiedliche Lösungsansätze der Affektbewältigung*

1. *Systemimmanente Lösungsansätze der Affektbewältigung*

Wenden wir uns zunächst zwei Schriftkomplexen zu, die einen *systemimmanenten* Lösungsansatz bieten, also im Rahmen einer *Volksreligion* bleiben: Dem 4. Makkabäerbuch und den Werken Philos von Alexandrien.

1.1 *Die Affektbewältigung im 4. Makkabäerbuch*

Das 4. Makkabäerbuch, eine jüdisch-hellenistischen Schrift, die um ca. 100 n. Christus zu datieren ist,[24] strebt eine Perfektionierung der Affektkontrolle an: Der Leitsatz, der sich durch das Buch zieht, besagt, daß der λογισμός, die Urteilskraft, souveräne Herrscherin über die πάθη, über die Leidenschaften ist (1:13). Anders als in der Stoa[25] kultiviert der λογισμός die πάθη (1:29), *ohne* auf ihre Ausrottung abzuzielen, wie *4 Macc* 3:2–5 zeigt:

> Die Begierde etwa kann niemand unter uns mit Stumpf und Stiel ausrotten, aber von der Begierde nicht versklavt zu werden, das vermag die Urteilskraft zu bewerkstelligen. (3) Den Zorn kann niemand unter euch einfach aus der Seele entfernen, aber dem Zorn abzuhelfen, dazu ist die Urteilskraft stark genug . . . (5) Denn die Urteilskraft ist nicht dazu da, die Leidenschaften zu entwurzeln, sondern dazu, sie in Schach zu halten[26]

—schließlich sind die πάθη Schöpfung Gottes ("von Gott" in den Menschen "eingepflanzt", 2:21). Wie ein "meisterlicher Gärtner" soll der λογισμός das Gestrüpp der Gewohnheiten und Leidenschaften durch gründliches Säubern, Beschneiden, Hochbinden, Benetzen und Begießen nachhaltig veredeln (1:29).

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[24] So H.-J. Klauck, *4. Makkabäerbuch* (JSHRZ III/6; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1989), 669. Die Datierung muß aber hypothetisch bleiben (zur Unsicherheit der Datierung vgl. vor allem C.K. Reggiani, *4 Maccabei* [Commentario storico ed esegetico all'antico e al Nuovo Testamento; Torino: Marietti, 1992], 51).

[25] Vgl. Cic, *Tusculanes* 3.13; 4.57.

[26] Vgl. *4 Macc.* 1:6.

Kein Bruch, sondern eine ständige Verbesserung durch kontinuierlichen Einsatz des λογισμός kennzeichnen das 4. Makkabäerbuch. Das religiöse Moment kommt darin zum Ausdruck, daß sich der λογισμός, der bisweilen als εὐσεβὴς λογισμός, als gottesfürchtige Urteilskraft[27] näher bestimmt wird, an der Thora orientiert: Nur die, die "aus ganzem Herzen für die Frömmigkeit Sorge tragen. . . . können die πάθη des Fleisches beherrschen" (7:18): Im Sinne der Thora wird eine Vervollkommnung des Lebens angestrebt. Da die Kultivierung, die Verbesserung des Menschen, durch den Menschen selbst (oder genauer durch seinen λογισμός) herbeigeführt wird, können wir im Hinblick auf das 4. Makkabäerbuch von einer *autodynamischen*[28] *Affektkultivierung* sprechen.

1.2 *Affektbewältigung bei Philo von Alexandrien.*

Ein anderer, weit bedeutender jüdisch-hellenistischer Gelehrter aus dem 1. Jh. n. Chr. ist Philo von Alexandrien. Bei Philo finden wir divergierende Aussagen im Hinblick auf die Affekte:

– Einerseits treffen wir—wie im 4. Makkabäerbuch—auf die Vorstellung, daß die Leidenschaften kultiviert werden müssen. Diese wird häufig mit Hilfe der Bilder vom Reiter und Steuermann ausgedrückt, vgl. *Agr.* 69:

> Der Reitkünstler dagegen legt, wenn er aufsteigen will, den Zügel auf, faßt beim Aufschwingen die Nackenmähne und—scheinbar dahingeführt, führt er in Wahrheit das tragende Tier wie ein Steuermann; denn auch dieser wird nur dem Scheine nach von dem gesteuerten Schiffe mitgeführt; in Wahrheit führt er es und lenkt es den ersehnten Häfen zu.

Der Steuermann, der sein Boot lenkt, und der Reiter, der die Pferde bändigt (*Leg All.* II.104), stehen für den klugen Geist (*Agr.* 73) oder die Vernunft (λογισμός, *Leg All.* I.73), welcher die Leidenschaften beherrscht; in *de Agricultura* 73 sind—genauer gesagt—die Begierde (ἐπιθυμία) und die Wut (θυμός) genannt.

– Andererseits treffen wir bei Philo auf die Vorstellung, daß die

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[27] 1:1; 7:16; 13:1; 15:20; 16:1; 18:2.

[28] Mit den Termini auto-, heter- und transformationsdynamisch greife ich auf Kategorien zurück, die der Historiker August Nitschke (A. Nitschke, *Historische Verhaltensforschung: Analysen gesellschaftlicher Verhaltensweisen—ein Arbeitsbuch*, [UTB 1153; Stuttgart: Eugen Ulmer 1981]) vorgeschlagen hat und adaptiere sie meinem Kontext.

Affekte bekämpft und ganz und gar ausgerissen und vernichtet werden müssen.[29]

In *de Agricultura* greift Philo auf dasselbe Bildfeld wie Pseudo-Josephus in *4 Macc.* 3:2–5 zurück, strebt aber im Gegensatz zu diesem nicht die Kultivierung, sondern die Ausrottung der πάθη an: "Durch diese landwirtschaftliche Kunst werden aber auch die Bäume der Affekte oder Schlechtigkeiten, die aufgesproßt und zur Höhe gewachsen waren, um verderbliche Frucht zu erzeugen, fortgeschnitten und entfernt, so daß auch nicht der kleinste Rest verbleibt, aus welchem neue Sprossen der Sünde wieder entstehen könnten".[30]

Bei Philo beobachten wir also nicht nur eine Kultivierung der Affekte, sondern auch einen Antagonismus der Affekte.

Diese Divergenz ist unterschiedlich interpretiert worden.[31] Ein möglicher Hinweis für die Lösung findet sich in Philo, *Leg All.* III.128–135: Dort stellt Philo Aaron als einen προκόπτων, als einen Vorwärtsstrebenden, und Mose als einen τέλειος σοφός, als einen vollkommenen Weisen vor. Aaron übt sich in der Mäßigung der Leidenschaften, während Mose "vollkommene Leidenschaftslosigkeit allezeit betätigt" (*Leg All.* III.131fin).

Die Divergenzen lassen sich also als Stufenfolge erklären: Ganz unten steht für Philo der ἄφρων, der Tor, der ganz seinen πάθη ausgeliefert ist und in einer grundlegenden στάσις zwischen Wollen und Tun lebt. Schon etwas weiter ist für Philo der προκόπτων, der Vorwärtsstrebende, der mittels der Thora und der Vernunft Fortschritte in der Affektkultivierung macht. Noch weiter ist der τέλειος σοφός, der vollkommene Weise, den Mose in *Leg All.* III.131 repräsentiert,— er bedarf weder des geschriebenen Gesetzes, noch mannigfaltiger Anstrengungen im Kampf gegen die Affekte, denn er lebt aufgrund der Gnade Gottes im Zustand der Apathie und handelt mühelos (ohne Anstrengungen) gemäß dem Naturgesetz.[32]

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[29] Philo, *Leg All.* 100–101.

[30] Philo, *Agr.* 10, vgl. Philo, *Agr.* 17: ". . . die Gewächse der Lust und Begier, des Zornes und der Aufwallung und ähnlicher Leidenschaften, mögen sie auch bis in den Himmel wachsen, werde ich (= die Kunst, die sich als Pflegerin der seelischen Landwirtschaft anbietet) austilgen und auch die Wurzeln verbrennen, indem ich des Flammenstoßes Gewalt gegen sie anlege bis in die letzten (Tiefen) der Erde hinein, so daß kein Teil, ja, keine Spur, kein Schatten mehr von ihnen übrig bleibt."

[31] Man hat z.B. wie Bousset die Tatsache hervorgehoben, daß Philo umsichtig die Tradition benutzt habe, oder wie Völker, daß Philo eine bikulturelle Persönlichkeit gewesen sei.

[32] Vgl. W. Knuth, *Der Begriff der Sünde bei Philon von Alexandria* (Würzburg: K. Triltsch,

Nur wenige Menschen wie Isaak und Mose erreichen den Zustand der Apathie mühelos oder mit geringer Anstrengung. Die Apathie ist für sie ein Geschenk Gottes. Sie sind Autodidakten (*Quod Det.* 29ff.), unabhängig von den geschrieben Gesetzen; sie handeln ohne Schwierigkeiten entsprechend dem Gesetz durch die Gnade Gottes, wobei das Gesetz als die rechte Vernunft der Natur zu verstehen ist.[33] Im Gegensatz dazu müssen die unvollkommenen Menschen kämpfen, sie müssen sich anstrengen, um vorwärts zu kommen (*Heres.* 275). In diesem Kampf ist es vor allem der λόγος, der die Affekte bekämpft.[34] Für diesen Kampf soll sich der προκόπτων an die Philosophie und an das Gesetz halten.[35] Letzteres kann zum Beispiel die Begierde (ἐπιθυμία) auslöschen, wie Philo in *De specialibus Legibus* IV.118 bezüglich der Speisegebote zeigt, die die Begierde auslöschen können "wie man dem Feuer den Brennstoff entzieht". Und wenn die Vernunft den Affekten unterworfen ist, hängt ihre Befreiung vom göttlichen Geist ab.[36] Im Gegensatz zur Stoa, wo der unvollkommene Mensch[37] selbst auf autodynamische Weise kämpfen muß,[38] wird dem Menschen auf jeder Stufe in seinen Bemühungen von Gott geholfen,[39]—was ihm aber erst bewußt wird, wenn er zu einer höheren Stufe fortgeschritten ist. Philo unterstreicht also im Gegensatz zu den Stoikern und dem Autor des 4. Makkabäerbuches eine heterodynamische

1934), 51–52; D. Winston, "Philo's Ethical Theory," in: *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt II/21/1: Principat* (Berlin, New York: W. de Gruyter, 1984), 372–416, hier: 405–414.

[33] Vgl. U. Duchrow, *Christenheit und Weltverantwortung: Traditionsgeschichte und systematische Struktur der Zweireichelehre* (Forschungen und Berichte der Evangelischen Studiengemeinschaft 25; Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1970), 106.

[34] Manchmal spricht Philo auch von λογισμός, von διάνοια und von σωφροσύνη.

[35] Siehe Philo, *Prob.* 84; *Vita Mos.* II.189; D. Zeller, *Charis bei Philon und Paulus* (SBS 142; Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1990), 159.

[36] D. Zeller, *Der Brief an die Römer: Übersetzt und erklärt* (RNT; Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1984), 144.

[37] Für die Unterscheidung von zwei Menschenklassen bei Philo nach der Stoa s. J. Juhnke, *Das Persönlichkeitsideal in der Stoa im Lichte der paulinischen Erlösungslehre* (Greifswalder theologische Forschungen 5; Greifswald: Universitätsverlag Ratsbuchhandlung L. Bamberg, 1934), 27.

[38] Vgl. D. Winston, 401 n. 98 bezüglich der Apathie: "The one apparent difference is that Isaac achieved this level without toil, being *automathes* or self-taught, whereas the Stoic sage has had to struggle to attain it." Winston schränkt jedoch ein: "This difference, however, is probably not very significant, since Seneca could say that some men are so blessed with *euphyia* that they seem to have attained wisdom virtually without effort".

[39] Diese göttliche Hilfe verdankt sich der Charis Gottes, s. D. Zeller, Charis, 100 und 103.

Lösung, die man im Hinblick auf die Affektbewältigung theodynamisch nennen kann.

Jedoch ist für Philo die Apathie nicht das letzte Ziel—anders als in der Stoa. Die Apathie ist für Philo nur ein vorbereitender Akt für den ekstatischen Aufschwung der Seele zu Gott, die auch als Hinabstieg Gottes zum Menschen beschrieben werden kann:[40] in der Ekstase ist es der menschliche νοῦς, sein Intellekt, der zur Neige geht wie die Sonne versinkt.[41]

Neben einer Affektkultivierung finden wir also bei Philo einen Affektantagonismus mit dem Ziel der Apathie, die der Mensch nicht selbst durch eigene Anstrengungen, sondern durch Hilfe von außen (von Gott und Gottes Geist), also heterodynamisch, erreicht.

2. *Systemtranszendierende Lösungsansätze der Affektbewältigung: Die Affektbewältigung bei Paulus*

Das 4. Makkabäerbuch und Philo von Alexandrien streben also systemimmanent eine Affektkultivierung bzw. einen Fortschritt hin zur Affektlosigkeit an, der nicht an Riten gebunden ist. Systemimmanent heißt: es handelt sich um einen Weg der Affektbewältigung innerhalb ein und desselben Überzeugungssystems: sie bleiben Juden.

Bei Paulus hingegen findet sich ein systemüberschreitendes Muster der Überwindung der Affekte, das eng mit dem grundlegenden Wandel

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[40] Vgl. Y. Amir, "Irrationales Denken in rationalem Gewande bei Philon von Alexandrien", in: ders., *Die hellenistische Gestalt des Judentums bei Philon von Alexandrien* (Forschungen zum jüdisch-christlichen Dialog 5; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag des Erziehungsvereins, 1983), 189–199, hier: 196.

[41] Siehe Philo, *Heres.* 263ff., wo Philo von Gen 15:12 ausgehend von der Ekstase spricht: "Gegen Sonnenuntergang überfiel (ihn) eine Ekstase". Philo interpretiert hier die Sonne als ein Symbol des menschlichen Intellekts. Philo folgert daraus (*Heres.* 265). "Es entfernt sich der Geist in uns bei der Ankunft des göttlichen Geistes und kommt wieder bei dessen Entfernung; denn Sterbliches kann füglich nicht mit Unsterblichem zusammenwohnen". In der Ekstase kann das göttliche πνεῦμα die Stelle des menschlichen νοῦς einnehmen (s. F. Siegert, *Philon von Alexandrien. Über die Gottesbezeichnung "wohltätig verzehrendes Feuer" (de Deo): Rückübersetzung des Fragments aus dem Armenischen, deutsche Übersetzung und Kommentar* (WUNT 46; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1988), 88.—In der Stoa ist der Aufstiegsgedanke "zum diesseitig-kosmischen Höhenflug des Geistes (Kosmosschau) und zum innerweltlich gedachten Aufstieg vollkommen rationalisiert" (E. Brandenburger, *Fleisch und Geist: Paulus und die dualistische Weisheit*, [WMANT 29; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1968], 158. Der Fortschritt ist also auf diese Welt begrenzt. Philo benutzt diese Ideen, geht aber weiter: er kennt einen mystischen Aufstieg, der die irdische und selbst die himmlische Welt dualistisch-mystisch übersteigt (vgl. E. Brandenburger, 158 n. 5).

in Christus[42] und bisweilen explizit mit einem Ritus verbunden ist, der diesen Wechsel den Christen apropriiert: mit der Taufe. Die Getauften verlassen das Überzeugungssystem: sie werden Christen. Die Verwandlung des Menschen wird bei Paulus noch radikaler gedacht, weil er hinsichtlich der Affektbewältigung pessimistischer als der Autor des 4. Makkabäerbuches und als Philo von Alexandrien ist.

Die Ohnmacht des Menschen gegenüber den Affekten bei Paulus

Die optimistische Auffassung des Autors des 4. Makkabäerbuches, daß der menschliche λογισμός, der sich an der Thora orientiert, fähig ist, die Affekte zu beherrschen, teilt Paulus nicht. Auch die Vorstellung, daß der Mensch mit Hilfe Gottes von einer immer größeren Kultivierung der Affekte schließlich zu einem Affektantagonismus voranschreiten könne, die wir bei Philo finden, fehlt bei Paulus. Für Paulus hat weder die Thora (1), noch die Vernunft (2) die Kraft (Fähigkeit) die Affekte zu beherrschen.

(1) Während die *Thora* für den Verfasser des 4. Makkabäerbuches mit ihrem Gebot "Du sollst nicht begehren" ein Beweis für die Möglichkeit ist, daß die Affekte zu beherrschen sind, und die Thora nach Philo sogar fähig ist, die ἐπιθυμία auszulöschen, ist sie nach Paulus nicht nur nicht in der Lage, die Affekte zu kontrollieren,[43] sondern sie kann sogar – veranlaßt durch die Sünde – die Affekte stimulieren (Rom 7:5b). Gerade das Gebot: "Du sollst nicht begehren!" *weckt* erst recht die Begierde.[44]

(2) Auch die optimistische Überzeugung, daß die menschliche *Vernunft*—ausgerichtet auf die Thora oder/und unterstützt von Gottes Geist—souverän über die Affekte herrschen könne, ist Paulus fremd: Er spricht einmal vom Gesetz der Vernunft, das im Streit liegt mit einem anderen Gesetz in den Gliedern, das den Menschen gefangenhält.

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[42] Die kosmische Dimension kommt durch den Gedanken der Äonenwende zum Ausdruck.

[43] Vgl. D.C. Aune, "Mastery of the Passions: Philo, 4 Maccabees and Earliest Christianity," in: *Hellenization Revisited: Shaping a Christian Response within the Greco-Roman World*, ed. W.E. Helleman (Lanham: University Press of America, 1994), 125–158, hier: 141; S. Lilla, "Middle Platonism, Neoplatonism and Jewish-Alexandrine Philosophy in the Terminology of Clement of Alexandria's Ethics," in: *Archivio italiano per la storia della pietà* 3 (1962): 1–36, hier: 31.

[44] Dahinter mag erstens die persönliche Erfahrung des Paulus stehen, daß die Thora in seinem Leben zu massiven aggressiven Affekten geführt hat (ζῆλος Phil 3:6). Dahinter mag zweitens die Erfahrung stehen, daß es in den Gemeinden immer wieder zum Streit um die Thora bzw. ausgelöst durch die Thora gekommen ist.

Paulus charakterisiert den Menschen als einen zerissenen[45]—er ist zerrissen zwischen Wollen und Tun. Diese στάσις zwischen Wollen und Tun beschreibt er in Rom 7:15 folgendermaßen: "Denn was ich vollbringe, durchschaue ich nicht; denn nicht was ich will, das tue ich, sondern was ich hasse, das tue ich". Paulus nimmt hier das in der Antike weit verbreitete Motiv der Übermacht der Affekte über die Vernunft auf, das wir u.a. im Monolog der Medea in Euripides gleichnamiger Tragödie finden, in der Medea, die schließlich ihre eigenen Kinder tötet, sagt: "Ich begreife, welche Untat ich begehen soll, die Leidenschaft (θυμός) aber ist stärker als meine Überlegungen, sie, die die Ursache des größten Unheils unter den Menschen ist."[46]

Paulus führt die Ohnmacht des Menschen, das zu tun, was er eigentlich tun will, darauf zurück, daß der Mensch fleischlich, σάρκινος ist, d.h. Sklave der Sünde.[47] Diese hält ihn gefangen und bewirkt in ihm πᾶσαν ἐπιθυμίαν (7:8). Zwar kann sich der innere Mensch, der ἔσω ἄνθρωπος, sehr wohl am Gesetz freuen (7:22), doch ist der Mensch in seinen Gliedern[48] Gefangener der Sünde (V.23). Die Sklaven- und Gefangenschaftsmetaphorik macht deutlich: Der Mensch hat in sich keine Möglichkeit der Selbstbefreiung: er ist der Sünde und seinen Affekten total ausgeliefert.[49] Eine Veränderung ist folglich für Paulus nicht vom Menschen und seinen Anstrengungen her möglich, sondern nur von außen: der Sünde, die nach Rom 7 im vorchristlichen Menschen wohnt, stellt Paulus in Rom 8 Gottes πνεῦμα entgegen, das im Menschen wohnt.[50] Nicht die Thora oder die Vernunft stellt Paulus den Affekten entgegen, sondern das göttliche πνεῦμα, das als eine Art göttlicher Gegenaffekt fungiert. Der Wechsel vom Gesetz "der Sünde und des Todes" zum "Gesetz des Geistes" bedeutet Befreiung des Menschen. Diesem Wechsel liegt die Tat Gottes in Christus zugrunde, der seinen Sohn in der Gestalt des sün-

[45] So in Rom 7:15 und 19.

[46] Übersetzung cf. G. Theißen, *Psychologische Aspekte paulinischer Theologie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983), 214.

[47] Vgl. Rom 7:14 (14b: "Ich bin Fleisch, d.h.: verkauft an die Sünde").

[48] "Die Glieder . . . die dem 'Gesetz der Sünde' unterworfen sind (V.23), sind . . . nichts Äußerliches am Menschen, sondern wiederum nichts anderes als ein Aspekt des ganzen Menschen selbst (wie aus dem Parallelismus in 6,13 klar hervorgeht . . .)", G. Röhser, *Metaphorik und Personifikation der Sünde. Antike Sündenvorstellungen und paulinische Hamartia* (WUNT II/25; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1987) 109 n. 166.

[49] G. Röhser, 111.

[50] 7:23: Der Mensch ist Gefangener des Gesetzes der Sünde, das in seinen Gliedern ist.

digen Fleisches gesandt und am Kreuz die Sünde ein für alle Mal verurteilt hat (Rom 8:3). Die entscheidene Wende für den Christen ist also in Christus begründet:

> Ihr aber seid nicht im Fleisch, sondern im Geist, wenn doch der Geist Gottes in euch wohnt. Wenn aber einer den Geist Christi nicht hat, der gehört nicht zu ihm. (10) Wenn jedoch Christus in euch ist, dann ist der Leib zwar tot wegen der Sünde, dereinst aber Leben wegen der Gerechtigkeit (Rom 8:9–10).

Der Weg zur Affektbewältigung bei Paulus

Wie vollzieht sich nun dieser entscheidende Wechsel des Menschen vom Fleisch zum Geist, von Sünde und Tod zu Leben und Gerechtigkeit (Rom 8:10)? Die Auferweckungsmetaphorik, die diesen Wechsel in Rom 8:11 beschreibt, begegnet wieder in Rom 6—dem Kapitel über die christliche Taufe. Hier wird deutlich, wie der in Christus vollzogene Wechsel dem Menschen appropriiert wird:

> Oder wißt ihr nicht, daß wir alle, die wir auf Christus Jesus getauft wurden, auf seinen Tod getauft wurden? (4) Wir wurden folglich mit ihm begraben durch die Taufe auf seinen Tod, damit wie Christus von den Toten auferweckt wurde durch die Herrlichkeit des Vaters, (so) auch wir in Neuheit des Lebens wandeln (Rom 6:3–4).[51]

Die Taufe vermittelt rituell die Partizipation an Christi Tod und Auferstehung und ist der Ausgangspunkt für einen neuen Lebenswandel.[52] Paulus zieht die Parallele zwischen Christi Sterben für die Sünde und seinem Leben für Gott (Rom 6:10–11) und des Menschen Totsein für die Sünde und sein Leben in Christus und folgert mit einem οὖν-paraeneticum daraus (Rom 6:12–13): "Es herrsche also (οὖν) nicht die Sünde in eurem sterblichen Leib, so daß ihr seinen ἐπιθυμίαι, seinen Begierden, gehorcht." Die ἐπιθυμίαι entspringen[53] dem sterblichen Leib, der der Sünde gehorcht. βασιλεύειν und ὑπακούειν evozieren

[51] Übers. D. Zeller, *Der Brief an die Römer. Übersetzt und erklärt* (RNT; Regensburg: Verlag F. Pustet, 1985), 122.

[52] D. Zeller, Römer, 124: "Wahrscheinlich wendet Paulus V 4 ein in seinen hellenistischen Gemeinden schon gängiges Verständnis der Taufe, das in ihr die Partizipation am Leben des Auferstandenen grundgelegt sah, ins Ethische".—Übrigens kann in späterer Zeit die Taufe mit der Enthaltsamkeit verbunden werden, so Acta Thomas 152 (fin); 131 (vgl. dazu Y. Tissot, Encratisme et Actes Apocryphes, in: F. Bovon, u.a. *Les Actes Apocryphes des Apôtres. Christianisme et monde païen* [Genève: Labor et Fides 1981], 109–119, hier: 118–119; vgl. ferner Marcion [cf. Tertullian, Adv. Marc. IV, 34,5] und Tatian [cf. bes. Clemens Alexandrinus, Strom. III, 82,6]).

[53] Darin Rom 7 vergleichbar (aber dort: σάρκινος).

die Abhängigkeit des Untertanen vom (königlichen) Herrscher,[54] eine Variation der Herr-Sklaven-Metaphorik, um die Abhängigkeit des Menschen von der Sünde zu beschreiben. Die Taufparänese (6:12) folgert, daß das der Taufe entspringende Leben "für Gott in Christus Jesus", dieser Macht nicht mehr unterworfen ist. Dieser in der Taufe grundsätzlich vollzogene Wechsel ist nun auch ganz konkret zu leben, wie die Mahnung des Paulus deutlich macht:

> Es herrsche also nicht die Sünde in eurem sterblichen Leib, so daß ihr seinen Begierden gehorcht, und stellt auch nicht weiter eure Glieder der Sünde als Waffen der Ungerechtigkeit zur Verfügung, vielmehr stellt euch Gott zur Verfügung als gleichsam aus den Toten Lebende und Eure Glieder als Waffen der Gerechtigkeit für Gott. Denn die Sünde wird fortan nicht Herr über Euch sein (Rom 6:12–14a).

Paulus macht hier den grundsätzlich zu lebendenWechsel an den μέλη, den Gliedern des Leibes fest: sie sollen sich nicht der Sünde, sondern Gott zur Verfügung stellen. Der enge Bezug der Sünde zu den Gliedern des menschlichen Lebens mit seinen ἐπίθυμίαι, seinen Begierden, macht deutlich, daß hier ein neuralgischer Punkt im Leben der Christen ist, ein risikobehaftetes "Einfallstor der Sünde",[55] das zu grundsätzlicher Mahnung nötigt.

In Gal 5 ist es nicht der Gegensatz Sünde—Gott, sondern der Gegensatz Fleisch—Geist (σάρξ—πνεῦμα), der das Kapitel bestimmt. Eine ganze Reihe Affekte zählt der Lasterkatalog auf, der die ἔργα τῆς σαρκός spezifiziert. Ihm wird ein Tugendkatalog entgegengesetzt, der die Frucht des Geistes beschreibt.

Wie in Rom 7 verweist Paulus auf die στάσις zwischen Wollen und Tun: "Ihr tut nicht, was ihr wollt". Doch anders als in Rom 7 charakterisiert Paulus damit nicht das vorchristliche Leben des Menschen, sondern das christliche Leben und führt die Unfähigkeit des Menschen nicht auf die σάρξ, das Fleisch, das "unter die Sünde verkauft ist", zurück, sondern auf den Widerstreit zwischen σάρξ und πνεῦμα, die

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[54] G. Röhser, 111.

[55] D. Zeller, Römer, 126. Die Frage, wem der Mensch seine Glieder zur Verfügung stellt, steht in Rom 6:13 zwar im Vordergrund, doch geht der konkrete Wechsel darüber hinaus, wie die positive Formulierung im Zentrum von V13 deutlich macht, der (im Unterschied zur rahmenden Formulierung) ein negatives Pendant fehlt: παραστήσατε ἑαυθτοὺς τῷ θεῷ ὡσεὶ ἐκ νεκρῶν ζῶντας.—In Rom 13:14 mahnt Paulus: sorgt nicht so für euren Leib, daß ihr den ἐπιθυμίαι verfallt. Die den Vers einleitende Metapher des "Anlegens" (ἐνδύσασθε τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν) läßt an die Taufe denken.

um das Ich konkurrieren und es so unfähig machen, das zu realisieren, was es will (Gal 5:17). Paulus hat hier offensichtlich einen traditionellen Spruch aufgenommen, der eine geläufige anthropologische Vorstellung zum Ausdruck bringt, und in den Kontext seiner Rede von Fleisch und Geist gestellt, die den Wechsel von vorchristlichem zu christlichem Leben beschreibt, der im christlichen Leben immer neu realisiert werden will.[56] Paulus begründet seine Paränese damit, daß er unterstreicht, daß diejenigen, die Christus angehören, das Fleisch mit seinen παθήματα und ἐπιθυμίαι mit seinen Affekten und Begierden gekreuzigt haben (5:24). Diese Anspielung auf die Taufe macht deutlich: Seit die Christen dem gekreuzigten und auferstandenen Christus angehören, der im Geist präsent ist (Gal 4:6), hat die σάρξ im Prinzip keine Macht mehr über sie, da sie nun im Geist leben: Aus diesem Indikativ[57] ergibt sich der Imperativ: "Wenn wir im Geist leben, so laßt uns auch im Geist wandeln" (Gal 5:25).[58]

C *Die Verbindung von Affektbewältigung und Ritus*

Im Urchristentum wird die Affektkontrolle oft (direkt oder indirekt) mit dem Ritus der Wiedergeburtstaufe verbunden. Diese Kombination ist neu wie ein Blick auf die Mysterienreligionen einerseits und die Philosophen andererseits zeigt. Erstere pflegen mit ihren Initiationen hochentwickelte Riten, die de facto Affekte künstlich auslösen, kanalisieren und den Affekthaushalt des Menschen psychisch stabilisieren.[59] Die Affektbewältigung als solche ist aber nicht das erklärte Ziel der Initiation und wird auch nicht weiter thematisiert. Letztere thematisieren zwar breit den Umgang mit den Affekten (in der Stoa mit

[56] Die Rede von der καινὴ κτίσις in Gal 6:15 macht deutlich, daß der Wechsel eine grundlegende soziale Neustrukturierung bedeutet.

[57] Der Indikativ, der dem menschlichen Leben vorausgeht, ist bei Paulus deutlicher herausgearbeitet als bei Philo.

[58] In 1 Cor 10, wo Paulus typologisch von der Taufe handelt, deutet Paulus die vielen Israeliten, die in der Wüste umkamen als warnendes Beispiel "für uns", für die Christen "εἰς τὸ μὴ εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἐπιθυμητὰ κακῶν" (10:6).

[59] Vgl. W. Burkert, *Antike Mysterien. Funktion und Gehalt* (München: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1994[3] [1990; engl. 1987]), 75–97: "Verwandelnde Erfahrung". Und dort bes. S. 83: Die Mysterienweihe gilt als geeignet, die Angst vor dem Tod zu überwinden, denn: "Der Schrecken ist vorweggenommen, der neue Status ist von bleibender Gültigkeit". Man kann sich das veranschaulichen an Hand einer entfernten Analogie in der Gegenwart: Der Urschreitherapie, vgl. A. Janov, *Der Urschrei: Ein neuer Weg der Psychotherapie* (Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1983).

dem Ziel der Affektlosigkeit, der Apathie), jedoch ohne auf einen Ritus zurückzugreifen, ohne einen Ritus zu praktizieren. Am nähesten kommen die Kyniker der urchristlichen Kombination: Hier kann die Hinwendung zum Kynismus von öffentlich-sichtbaren Zeichen begleitet sein: der Kyniker läßt sein Haar wachsen, hat einen Mantel, eine Tasche und einen Stab.[60] Doch diese öffentlich-sichtbaren Zeichen sind letztendlich identity markers—es fehlt ein rite de passage.

Auch ein Blick auf das hellenistische Judentum, das die Affektthematik aus der hellenistischen Umwelt aufgreift, zeigt, daß die Kombination der Affektbewältigung mit einem Ritus fehlt: Der Autor des 4. Makkabäerbuches vertritt eine autodynamische Affektbewältigung ausgerichtet auf die Thora, Philo vertritt eine Kombination aus auto- und heterodynamischer Affektbewältigung, eine Kombination aus thoradynamischer Affektkontrolle und pneuma- (bzw. theo-) dynamischer Affektüberwindung, die an keinen Ritus gebunden ist. Gleichwohl ist beiden die rituelle Dimension nicht fremd,[61] diese ist aber nicht eingespannt in einen Gegensatz von Einst und Jetzt, von Tod und Leben.

Nun ist die Affektthematik auch bei Paulus und in der paulinischen Tradition nicht immer eindeutig mit dem Taufritus verbunden, wie wir gesehen haben: Nur Rom 6, Col 2 und 3 und in Titus 3 ist die Verbindung explizit. In Gal 5:16ff.; Eph 2 und 4 und im 1. Petrusbrief ist die Taufe zwar nicht explizit erwähnt, jedoch legen Taufterminologie und -metaphorik einen solchen Hintergrund nahe und dieser dürfte auch von den Hörern sofort assoziiert worden sein.

Gehen wir die Stellen durch, so fällt auf, daß sie sich fast alle in polemischem Kontext situieren:

- Der Römerbrief steht in Auseinandersetzung mit Libertinisten (vgl. Rom 6:1),
- der Kolosserbrief steht in Auseinandersetzung mit einer als Irrlehre eingestuften Philosophie,
- der Titusbrief steht in Auseinandersetzung mit Häretikern (vgl. die Ketzerpolemik in Titus 3:9–10),

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[60] Vgl. F.G. Downing, *Christ and the Cynics: Jesus and other Radical Preachers in First-Century Tradition* (JSOT Manuals 4; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988), 13; sowie G. Theißen, "Wanderradikalimus. Literatursoziologische Aspekte der Überlieferung von Worten Jesu im Urchristentum", in: idem, *Studien zur Soziologie des Urchristentums* (WUNT 19; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck] 1983²), 79–105, hier: 93.

[61] S. oben S. 121, Anm. 22.

– der Galaterbrief steht in Auseinandersetzung mit Judaisten,
– der 1. Petrusbrief steht in Auseinandersetzung mit der Umwelt.[62]

Diese Beobachtung legt nahe, daß gerade in kritischen Situationen auf die Taufe rekurriert wird. Der Rekurs auf die Taufe hat dabei die Funktion, in unklaren, kritischen Siuationen auf ein sichtbares, sozial verbindendes und verbindliches Ritual zu verweisen. Die Taufe als sichtbarer öffentlicher Akt stellt rituell den unsichtbaren, inneren Herrschaftswechsel dar.

Neben dieser Sichtbarmachung einer individuellen Neustrukturierung, die einen Anklang an den äußeren Merkmalen der Kyniker hat, ist da noch ein sozialer und soziologischer Faktor, der für die Neukombination von Affektkontrolle und Taufritus bei Paulus und in der paulinischen Tradition charakteristisch sein könnte: Die Taufe ist bei Paulus und in der paulinischen Tradition[63] ein Ritus, der in einen sozialen Kontext eingebettet ist und neue soziale Bezüge herstellt: durch den Taufritus wird der Täufling in die familia Dei, in den Leib Christi integriert.

Während die Initiation in eine Mysterienreligion—mit Ausnahme der Mithrasreligion[64]—keine Mitgliedschaft in einer (stabilen) Gemeinschaft nach sich zieht,[65] ist gerade dies nach dem Zeugnis der neutestamentlichen Briefe im Urchristentum der Fall.[66]

– Der harte und vor allem exklusive (Monotheismus) Übergang von einem Lebens- und Interpretationszusammenhang in einen anderen legt—anders als in einem Streben zu größerer Affektbewältigung

[62] Nur beim Epheserbrief ist bis jetzt kein eindeutig polemischer Kontext nachgewiesen; es könnte jedoch sein, daß der Epheserbrief in einer Auseinandersetzung um das Pauluserbe steht: Im Epheserbrief wird Paulus als Apostel des Friedens dargestellt: der friedfertige Paulus steht also womöglich implizit gegen den kämpferischen Paulus.

[63] Anders Acts 8:26ff.

[64] Vgl. W. Burkert, 45–46. Jedoch sind die Zeugnisse für eine "Taufe" in den vorchristlichen Mysterien spärlich. Für den Mithraskult ist nur auf einige wenige Bemerkungen von Tertullian (Tert, *bapt* 5.1, vgl. *praescr. haer.* 40, 3–4) und von Ps.-Augustin (*questiones Veteris et Novi Testamenti* CXIV 11 [PL 35.2343]) zu verweisen, vgl. Burkert, 86 mit n. 74 und n. 78.

[65] Vgl. W. Burkert, 35; D. Zeller, "Die Mysterienkulte und die paulinische Soteriologie (Röm 6,1–11). Eine Fallstudie zum Synkretismus im Neuen Testament", in: *Suchbewegungen: Synkretismus, kulturelle Identität und kirchliches Bekenntnis*, ed. H.P. Siller (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1991), 42–61, hier 47.

[66] In antiken Philosophenschulen kann die Gemeinschaft sehr eng sein (s. P. Hadot, *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie antique?* [Paris: Gallimard, 1995], 241–242), jedoch gibt es dort m. W. keinen dem Christentum entsprechenden Aufnahmeritus.

im Judentum einen "rite de passage" nahe,[67] der im Heidenchristentum stark kontrastiv (als Gegensatz zwischen einst und jetzt) erlebt und interpretiert wurde.

– Die christliche Gemeinde ist—anders als z.B. viele Philosophenschulen—heterogen: mittels der Taufe werden Männer und Frauen, Heiden- und Judenchristen, Mitglieder unterschiedlichster Schichten auf's engste verbunden. Von dem Stolz, solche Unterschiede in der Taufe überwunden zu haben, zeugen die Taufformeln in Gal 3:28 und Col 3:5–11. Die Spannungen, die die Unterschiede automatisch erzeugen, nötigen zu gesteigerter Affektkontrolle.[68]

– Nun versuchten Philosophen, also primär Mitglieder der Oberschicht, ihre Affekte autodynamisch zu kontrollieren.[69] Der Autor des 4. Makkabäerbuchs und Philo von Alexandrien, beide Mitglieder der Oberschicht, suchen die Idee der Affektbewältigung im religiösen Kontext durchzuführen. Bei den Kynikern wird das Thema der Affektkontrolle popularisiert und bei den Christen ist es auch für Mitglieder von Unterschichten—in Verbindung mit einem kostenneutralen Ritual[70]—bestimmend, denn die Adressaten des Paulus und der Briefe in seiner Tradition dürften mehrheitlich den Unterschichten zuzuordnen sein (vgl. 1 Cor 1:26). Daß auch sie imstande sind, ihre Affekte zu kontrollieren, dafür besitzen wir auch ein Zeugnis von außen: Galen, ein griechischer Arzt, vermerkt im 2. Jahrhundert bezüglich der Christen:

> "Most people are unable to follow any demonstrative argument consecutively; hence they need parables, and benefit from them"—and he (Galen) understands by parables tales of rewards and punishments in a future life—"just as now we see the people called Christians drawing their faith from parables (and miracles), and yet sometimes acting in the same way (as those who philosophize). For their contempt of death (and of its sequel) is patent to us every day, and likewise their restraint in cohabitation. For they include not only men but also women who refrain from cohabiting all through their lives; and they also num-

[67] Vgl. im Judentum die Proselytentaufe und die Beschneidung. Auch die Initiation in eine Mysterienreligion war nicht exklusiv und einmalig: die Initiation bedingte keine Absage an die vorher praktizierte Religion, zudem waren Initiationen in mehrere Mysterien möglich.

[68] *S.o.* S. 115.

[69] Sicher auch mit Rücksicht auf ihre Stellung und Rolle: als Herr eines οἶκος ist es langfristig vorteilhafter, seine Affekte zu beherrschen.

[70] Apuleius, Metam. zeigt, daß Initiationen sehr kostspielig sein konnten: Apuleius hat kaum das Geld für seine zweite Initiation (Apuleius, *Metamorphosen* XI. 28.1–4).

> ber individuals who, in self-discipline and self-control in matters of food and drink, and in their keen pursuit of justice, have attained a pitch not inferior to that of genuine philosophers."[71]

Im Christentum ist also auch die "breite Masse" zu einer Affektkontrolle imstande, die sonst nur für Philosophen, also tendenziell Mitglieder der Elite, charakteristisch ist. Die individuelle, psychische Neustrukturierung wird durch den Ritus der Taufe gestützt und sichtbar gemacht: Der grundlegende Wechsel wird symbolisch dargestellt, sozial eingebettet und kontrolliert: Soziale und psychische Neustrukturierung stehen im Urchristentum also in einer unauflöslichen Interdependenz. Haben "rites de passage" ihren zentralen Haftpunkt an grundlegenden biographischen Einschnitten wie Geburt, Erwachsenwerden, Hochzeit und Tod, so markiert der Ritus der Taufe die Wiedergeburt des Einzelnen. Dieser Ritus wird zur psychischen Restrukturierung aktiviert und immer neu aktiviert, denn der Christ befindet sich im Zustand der Liminalität[72]—er ist nach Rom 6:3–5 zwar in der Taufe mit Christus begraben, jedoch steht für ihn—anders als für Christus—die Auferstehung von den Toten noch aus.[73] Der Christ befindet sich also in einem Zwischenzustand: mit der Taufe hat ein Transformationsprozeß begonnen, der erst in der Zukunft abgeschlossen sein wird: "The whole of this life for the believer is suspended . . . between the conversion—initiation which began the process and the resurrection of the body which will complete it. The very real dying of believers is a lifelong process . . .".[74] Die christliche Existenz ist also als Zwischenzustand zwischen dem Tod und dem neuen Leben zu beschreiben. Diese Liminalität hat ihre Analogie in der kosmischen Weltdeutung des Urchristentums: die Welt ist im Übergang von der alten zur neuen Welt: Sie ist geprägt von der Spannung zwischen "schon" und "noch nicht".

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[71] Walzer, R., *Galen on Jews and Christians* (OCPM; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949), 15.

[72] Vgl. Christian Strecker, *Transformation, Liminalität, Communitas bei Paulus. Kulturanthropologische Zugänge zur paulinischen Theologie* (Diss. (masch.); Neuendettelsau, 1995) 23–24 und V. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1995 = 1969).

[73] Das τῆς ἀναστάσεως ἐσόμεθα ist hier als temporales Futur verstanden (so mehrheitlich in der Exegese). Grammatikalisch möglich wäre aber auch ein logisches Futur. Bei den Deuteropaulinen hingegen ist eine Verschiebung hin auf die präsentische Eschatologie zu beobachten.

[74] J.D.G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8* (World Biblical Commentary 38A; Dallas, Texas: Word Books, Publisher), 331.

Was die Zuordnung des Christentums zu Religionstypologien angeht, so konnten wir Züge einer subkulturellen Minderheitsreligion (so bes. 1 Pet), einer Universalreligion (so bes. Col), einer Versöhnungsreligion (so bes. Eph und der Lasterkatalog in Gal 5), aber auch Elemente einer Erlösungsreligion (vgl. die Kontrastierung von σάρξ und πνεῦμα in Gal 5) feststellen. Aber wir hatten auch gesehen, daß keine dieser Religionstypologien ausreicht, um das Urchristentum zu bestimmen. Selbst wenn man sie kombiniert und nur als Beschreibungskategorien eines komplexen Phänomens verwendet, läßt sich das Urchristentum nicht eindeutig einer Typologie zuordnen. Dafür können wir jetzt eine Erklärung geben: das Urchristentum ist selbst eine "liminale Bewegung"[75]--es ist eine Religion im Übergang--im Übergang wie der Christ und der Kosmos. Insofern ist die mit der Taufe inszenierte Liminalität, die dem Menschen eine neue Bewältigung seiner Affekte erlaubt, charakteristisch für das Urchristentum.

[75] Zum Begriff vgl. Chr. Strecker, 35.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE INNER SELF IN GNOSTIC AND HERMETIC TEXTS

GIOVANNI FILORAMO

1. *Self, Community, Conversion*

The radical religious groups "frequently display an uncommon self-concern . . . (They) tend to be highly concerned with the self as an entity detached from customary occupational roles and family relationship, and this gives their self-attention its distinctive quality. A marked degree of self-involvement, whether in the form of self-love or self-hatred, is common to the effort to 'express' oneself, to 'purify' the self or to 'lose' it, either in organic community or in the Divine".[1] At the beginning of our paper, this description of the search of the Self in the modern radical American communities can help us focus on the historical function and nature of the Self in the ancient gnostic and hermetic groups. In this historical case what does Self mean precisely? What is its nature and structure? What type of cure did the divided Self of gnostics and hermetics need?

Despite what Foucault claims,[2] the *cura sui*, so important in the pagan imperial philosophy of the time,[3] was not so important in Christian tradition. In general terms, this depended on the fact that the Christian anti-intellectualistic anthropology identified the essence of man not in the intellect (or in a soul which was assimilable with it), but in the indissoluble compound of the flesh with the soul, given once and for all. Following the model of the creation of the primal

[1] L. Veysey, *The communal experience* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 59. I have tried to study the role of the category of the Self in the new religiosity, especially New Age, in *Le vie del sacro. Religione e modernità* (Torino: Einaudi, 1994). See also A. Melucci, *The Playing Self: Person and Meaning in the Planetary Society* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Ph. Wexler, *Holy Sparks. Social Theory, Education, and Theory* (New York: St. Martin Press, 1996).

[2] See *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, eds. Luther H. Martin, H. Gutman, Patrick H. Hutton, (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1988).

[3] See P. Hadot, *Exercices spirituels et philosophie antique* Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1987).

man, the divine spirit was added; given his transcendent origin, therefore, it could not constitute the essence of man.[4]

Thus, to be converted from paganism to Christianism also involved the conversion from an anthropology that identified the essence of man in his intellect (or in a soul which was assimilable with it) to a radically different anthropology. As the example of Ireneus demonstrates, this essence was identified with the flesh.[5] In any case, as is clear also in the Christian Platonists, the centrality of the Self was lost as a result of the new conception of God and of man.

We can find a significative corroboration of this difference in the vocabulary of the conversion process. The Christian *epistrophe*—which, unlike the pagan, was often accompanied by repentance—seems to ignore the essential characteristic of the pagan *epistrophe*, which above all means a turning towards oneself. This is a consequence of the different concept of the divine. Indeed, the Christian conversion is governed by the idea of reciprocity of relations between the convert and the God to whom he (or she) is converting: only if together the subjects of this encounter "convert" one to the other, can the conversion take place. On the contrary, the pagan *epistrophe* is a movement which ignores this reciprocity, because for a pagan thinker it is unbelievable that, in its perfection, the superior turns itself towards the inferior, the model towards the image, he who generates towards he who is generated. As Porphyry said in a drastic way, perhaps polemically with the Christian vision, a *conversio ad inferiora* is nothing but imperfection.[6]

The position of the gnostic and hermetic process of conversion is located between these two extremes. On the one hand, in their radical introspectivity, the gnostics attributed an importance to the Self as ontological foundation of the individual which had been ignored until then, so that they can be defined, following a famous definition of H.Ch. Puech, as an Ego in search of its Self.[7] It follows that at the center of the process of the gnosis we find the transformation of the Self. In keeping with a philosophical tradition which is rooted

[4] See what I observe in "Antropologie in conflitto: Il caso di Ireneo e degli gnostici" *Humanitas* 1 (1996): 52–67; see also P.-H. Poirier, "Nascita di un'antropologia cristiana (I–II secolo)", in: *Trattato di antropologia del sacro. V: Il credente nelle religioni ebraica, musulmana e cristiana*, ed. J. Ries (Milano: Jaka Book, 1993), 195–284.

[5] See A. Orbe, *Teología de S. Ireneo* (Madrid: La Editional Catolica, 1985), 22.

[6] See P. Aubin, *Le problème de la "conversion"* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1963), 186–7.

[7] H.-Ch. Puech, *Sulle tracce della gnosi* (Milano: Adelphi, 1985), 421–422.

in the Aristotelian conception of the intellect,[8] what hermetics and gnostics are searching for is the knowledge of the real Self as knowledge which reveals the ontological bonds which tie the individual intellect to the universal Intellect and, in this way, the individual self to the infinite or absolute Self. Essentially, this is an anti-individualistic or, in any case, a non-individualistic conception, because its aim was the reintegration of the individual Self into the cosmic or divine order.[9] In this sense, we could agree with those scholars who have underlined the continuity between the search of the Self of the ancient philosophy and the search of the Self of gnostics and hermetics, asserting that in this way the gnostic tradition, like the pagan, ignores a real concept of person.[10]

However, this judgement can be pursued only to a certain extent. Indeed, in the hermetic and gnostic texts we can find a process of conversion described which, as for the Christians, is founded on a relation of reciprocity between the God and the converted. Only because the supreme God, in His infinite mercifulness and inscrutable will, at a certain moment decided to turn Himself towards the potential gnostic, can he effectively convert himself. In this sense, his moral efforts constitute a precondition of the process, not the process itself. This is substantially different from the pagan philosophical tradition of the "spiritual exercises" studied by Pierre Hadot and so wonderfully described by Porphyry in his letter to his wife Marcella.[11] In this way, unlike the pagan, the gnostic and hermetic process of transformation of the Self can be described as the outcome of a reciprocal relation between the supreme God and the hermetic or gnostic. Only in this way, this self, ontologically divided between the terrestrial "feminine" element and the celestial "masculine" counterpart, will be reunited. Alone, it is impossible to get over this division. This is the reason why, unlike the pagan conversion, and following the Christian, the gnostic process of conversion calls for rituals, requires a collective context of beliefs and practices which allow the gnostic

[8] See A.H. Armstrong, *The Architecture of the Intelligible World in the Philosophy of Plotinus* (Amsterdam: 1967), 39–40.

[9] See L.H. Martin, "The anti-individualistic Ideology of Hellenistic Culture", *Numen* 41 (1994): 117–140.

[10] See G.G. Stroumsa, "*Caro salutis cardo*: Formation de la personne chrétienne", in: Id., *Savoir et salut* (Paris: Cerf, 1992), 199–223.

[11] Porphyry, *Marc.* 32. Cf. P. Courcelle, *Connais-toi-même, de Socrate à saint Bernard*, I (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1974), 87–91.

or the hermetic to find a framework by which and on which it will be possible to construct the new building of its personality.

2. *Rituals of transformation*

An essential aspect of conversion is the fact that it is "an experience that is rooted in both self and society". Therefore, it "involves a personally acknowledged transformation of the self and a society recognised display of change". Furthermore, "in its social aspects, conversion resembles rites of passage . . . is a reshaping of inner vision . . . a 'laser' that centers the diffusing and fragmented energy into a tight, potent focus".[12] For this reason, it is fundamental to understand the ritual context in which this process takes place.

Now, if we try to apply this general rule to the specific case of gnostic and hermetic conversion, we immediately run into a fundamental difficulty: didn't gnostic and hermetic rituals of transformation of the Self exist, by which the divided Ego could finally find its real Self? This is not a rhetorical question, because we know the secondary role that the ritual played for the gnostics. Following the pneumatic equation remembered in a Valentinian text, "one ought not to celebrate the mystery of the ineffable and invisible power by means of visible and corruptible created things, the inconceivable and incorporeal by means of what is sensually tangible and corporeal. The perfect redemption is said to be the knowledge of the ineffable 'Greatness'".[13] In other terms, according to an anti-ritualistic tradition witnessed both in pagan and Judaic and Christian milieus[14] (one should remember the cult in spirit and truth of John 4, 23), the gnostics, too, saw the real purification in a purely interior act, which, as Spinoza says in a famous page of his *Tractate*, "does not require rites, that is, actions that for themselves are indifferent and that are named good only from an institutional point of view".[15] The same can be said for the hermetics, if we remember the centrality they assign to the theme of the "spiritual sacrifice".

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[12] B. Jules-Rosette, "The Conversion Experience. The Apostles of John Maranke," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 7 (1975), 132–3.

[13] Irenaeus, *Against the Heresies*, I 21, 4.

[14] For other references see what I observe in *Figure del sacro* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 1993), 283.

[15] Spinoza, *Trattato teologico-politico* (Torino: Einaudi, 1972), 108.

The traces of ritual processes that, despite this, can be found in the gnostic texts, such as certain baptismal rites or the sacrament of the spiritual wedding,[16] show a certain type of ritual process, characterised by an elusive symbolism. In any case, this type of document does not allow the understanding of the gnostic process of self-transformation.

The hermetic case is a little different. We have two treatises, *Corpus hermeticum* XIII and the coptic *The Discourse on the Eight and Ninth* (NHC VI, 6),[17] at our disposal. Taken together, they describe a typical process of regeneration, whose gnostic nature is evident.[18] What is not so evident is the nature of this process: is it a real ritual process, which therefore presupposes the existence of a hermetic community or, as J. Festugière thought with other interpreters,[19] is it a typical "literary mystery", without any community basis?[20] For our aims, this conflict of interpretations matters only to a certain degree, and, in any case, it is a clear symptom of the particular nature of the ritual processes working in these gnostic circles, and which swing between the purely interior search typical of the ancient pagan spiritual exercises and the effort, typical of the first moral Christian communities, to articulate ritual processes which are very-well structured and socially regulated and controlled.

Like other hermetic writings, from a literary point of view the two treatises assume a form of two *logoi* of learning, in which a teacher, Hermes, is teaching a pupil, Tat.[21] More precisely, the two treatises

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[16] See K. Rudolph, *Die Gnosis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), 238–261.

[17] See P.A. Dirkse – J. Brashler – D.M. Parrott, *The Discourse on the Eight and the Ninth (NH VI, 6)* (*Nag Hammadi Studies* 11) (Leiden: Brill, 1979); Lewis S. Keizer, *The Eighth Reveals the Ninth. A New Hermetic Initiation Discourse (Tractate 6, Nag Hammadi Codex VI)* (Seaside, Cal. 1974); J.-P. Mahé, *Hermès en Haute-Égypte. Les textes hermétiques de Nag Hammadi et leurs parallèles grecs et latins. Tome I* (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1978). Dr. A. Camplani is preparing a new Commentary on this gnostic Coptic tractate. I thank him for his kindness for allowing me to read it before publication.

[18] See A.-J. Festugière, *La Révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste. IV Le Dieu inconnu* (Paris: Gabalda, 1954); Grese C. William, *Corpus Hermeticum XIII and Early Christian Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 1979).

[19] *Le Dieu inconnu*, 207.

[20] See G. Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes. A historical approach to the late pagan mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 159–160.

[21] See Festugière, *Révélation II Le Dieu cosmique*, 28–50; J.-P. Mahé, *Hermès en Haute-Égypte. Le fragment du "Discours Parfait" et les "Définitions" hermétiques arméniennes*, Tome II (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1982), 278–303. On the spiritual guides see R. Valantasis, *Spiritual Guides of the Third Century. A Semiotic Study of the Guide-Disciple Relationship in Christianity, Neoplatonism, Hermetism, and Gnosticism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991).

have a typical esoteric feature. After the "general lessons", in which Tat has been initiated to the preliminaries of the doctrine, he is now prepared to receive the core of the initiation: illumination. It coincides with the regeneration of the initiate, a mystic birth typical of the process of initiation and which is described with a wealth of detail. Providing an instructive description of the ritual process of conversion, the two writings are thus giving a model and an example which can be followed by other disciples who do not have such an exceptional teacher as Hermes at hand. Thus, if we accept the ritualistic hypothesis, the two treatises constitute a kind of handbook of hermetic communities; otherwise, if we accept the hypothesis of the literay mystery, they are the "Hermes" of the situation, in the sense that they are the guide who the initiate could refer to in order to find the model to experiment with his regeneration.

Even if the gnostic texts do not offer anything like this, we have a source that, in some way, beginning from the literary genre, is similar to these hermetic texts. It is the so-called Logos or dialogue of revelation, a literary genre peculiar to gnostic literature.[22] According to this framework, the resurrected Christ is said to remain on earth for a variable period with the aim of initiating the circle of disciples to gnostic mysteries. Even if without an evident ritual background, for the gnostic reader this literary genre carries out the same initiatory function as the two hermetic treatises. In fact, through the fictitious dialogue between the Resurrected and the beloved disciples, what these frameworks are describing, is the process of transmission of the gnosis. As with hermetic regeneration, it is a process which coincides with a vision which, simultaneously, is an illumination. The object of this vision and, at the same time, the agent of this illumination is the Revealer. Like Hermes, the resurrected Christ works as a initiating teacher who, after having himself experimented the illumination-regeneration, offers himself to the pupil as a model or, better, as a midwife.[23] In effect, he is the spiritual cause of the birth of a new anthropological reality, the man of light, who will be

[22] See K. Rudolph, "Der gnostische 'Dialog' als literarisches Genus", in *Probleme der koptischen Literatur*, ed. P. Nagel (Halle: Martin Luther Universität, 1968), 85–108; Ph. Perkins, *The Gnostic Dialogue* (New York – Ramsey – Toronto: Paulist Press, 1980).

[23] For a sufi parallel see "Gender and Spiritual Self-Fashioning: The Master-Disciple Relationship in Classical Sufism" *Journal of American Academy of Religion* 64 (1996), 89–117.

the result of the process of interior transformation following which the disciples will become definitively gnostics.[24]

Therefore, if we are to understand the gnostic and hermetic process of transformation of the inner self, it will be useful to analyse these two types of document, beginning with the hermetic sources, with the principal aim of illustrating what they have in common and how they differ, and, subsequently, to place them more precisely in the general landscape of the ancient processes of conversion.

3. *The hermetic regeneration process*

The hermetic regeneration appears as the mystery which saves; for this aim, it is placed in a typical initiating structure based on levels (*bathmoi*). The disciple must prepare himself adequately, detaching himself from the world and purifying himself completely. It is an ethic purification: thanks to his correct and right behaviour, Tat is now in the ebdomad, symbol of the level to which the initiate can reach as a result of his responsible action. The following phase of the initiation, which constitutes the core of the ritual process, coincides with the acquisition of gnosis. As is underlined by CH XIII, it is an expulsion of twelve vices, which correspond to the ancient man; their place is taken by ten powers, symbols of the new anthropological reality. Thus, the formation of the new man is an ethic process which prepares and culminates in the intellectual acquisition of gnosis.

Using medical terminology, the generation of new man is presented as a *sunarthrosis*, a re-formation of the divine *logos* in the interiority of the initiate or, more precisely, the acquisition of a body of immortality, which is invisible to the physical sight. The generation of this body is the result of a two-fold movement: from above and from below. On the one hand, it is an illumination from above, from a "masculine" power, towards a "feminine" substance which is waiting to receive the luminous seed of the generating power. In other terms, following the rules of any spiritual physiology which is culturally conditioned, this process of spiritual regeneration also presupposes a concrete generative model, in this case the epigenetic model put forward

[24] On the function of the vision in the gnostic dialogues of revelation see what I observe in *Il risveglio della gnosi ovvero diventare dio* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1990), 54–59.

by Aristotle, where the male seed functions as a formal principle towards a passive feminine substance.[25] On the other hand, the disciple is participating, in his way, in the process of self-generation. As CH XIII states, Hermes invites Tat to draw the divine power with an act of will, stopping the sensorial activity and so purifying himself perfectly. In the same way, in the treatise on the Eighth and Ninth Hermes recites a prayer which plays the same magic-religious function as obtaining the spiritual gift of regeneration, and so provoking the divine intervention.

The process of the disciple's transformation presupposes the teacher's process of transformation too. It is, in particular, the Coptic treatise that develops this theme. It describes a two-fold experience of illumination-regeneration: the experience of Hermes, indeed, is the mirror in which Tat, in his turn, can observe the experience of his regeneration. In this way, the hermetic treatises underline the decisive role played by the initiator. He is the "father" of the initiate, as he is the father of the other hermetists, his brothers, who, together, make up the social framework of the ritual process.

In this ecstatic experience, the central role is played by the intellectual vision of the world of the divine powers. Indeed, on receiving the luminous power, the pneuma, from above, the world of the divine powers becomes visible. More precisely, what Hermes sees is, at the same time, both a source bubbling with life, which is the basis of the universal Intellect or infinite Self, and his individual Self. In this way, through this illuminating vision, the particular intellect of Hermes can be reunited with his source, the universal Intellect: in other terms, the division of the Self, which is ontologically founded, has been overcome through a process which, in more abstract terms, we can define as the realisation of the individual self in the universal Self.

At this point, the vision of the disciple can follow. At first, Tat had seen the superior world only indirectly, as in a mirror, in the self-generating Hermes, following a well documented model in the magical Greek papyry. Now, at the core of his initiation, he will see the world of the divine powers directly; in this way, he can penetrate from the ebdomad to the ogdoad, following an ancient model

[25] See what I observe in *Luce e gnosi. Saggio sull'illuminazione nello gnosticismo* (Roma: Institutum Patristicum "Augustinianum" 1980), 49-54.

of cosmic journey which is, actually, an interior journey. However, his spiritual journey has not finished. As before Hermes had seen the same process of eternal generation which, set off by the Ingenerate, starts the self-generating principle of the world, and precisely the Soul of the world; so now the disciple, at the apex of his vision, is able to see the supreme Principle in his eternal creating action, while He is "creating in the spirit". Indeed, Tat has arrived at the top of the pyramid: the divine world which is situated beyond the ennead or the world of the powers. Thus, the vision coincides with an interior journey through the chain of being, arriving at the root which is his root. In this sense, the vision enables the disciple to be assimilated by what he has seen, that is, the eternal generation of the superior world.

The consequences of the vision are different in the two treatises. While in the Coptic treatise it is followed by a silent prayer of thanks, which expresses the joyful rest of the initiate; in CH XIII Tat expresses the joy of the new birth with a declaration of participation in the cosmic life, typical of hermetic piety: "I am in the sky, in the earth, in the water, in the air; I am in the animals, in the plants, in the womb, before the womb, everywhere".[26] With this cosmic ebriety the initiate reveals the specific conception of the divine underlying the experience of regeneration. The hermetic God is not separated from the world, because He manifests Himself in this world, diffusing a life which is His life. Therefore, the world is not opposed to God, since, following the conceptions of the era about the cosmic God, it is a mirror and, at the same time, the place of the invisible God's manifestation. Consequently, in the process of regeneration the typical gnosis of the hermetism finds concrete realisation—and, to a certain extent, also ritually. This gnosis is expressed in a hermetic *Definition* (IX, 4): "every thing can be seen by those in possession of the intellect; he who reflects himself as intellect knows himself and he who knows himself knows (at the same time) the Totality. The Totality is in man". In this way, the process of hermetic regeneration is a process of reintegration of the individual self in an infinite Self who is, at the same time, interior and cosmic.

[26] CH XIII, 11; see also XI, 20.

4. *Vision and regeneration in the gnostic texts*

We can now proceed to examine the way the gnostics imagined the process of regeneration as witnessed by the frameworks of the Dialogues of revelation.

The resurrected Christ plays the same role of initiator towards the disciples played by Hermes towards Tat. This presupposes that He too, before initiating, has been initiated. Indeed, he who is speaking is the perfect revealer. He is the Saviour constituted in the fullness of his powers, formed not only according to the substance but also according to the gnosis. In the *Pistis Sophia*,[27] this theological element is dramatically represented. While the Resurrected is meditating on his destiny, he receives the celestial robes that he had left before descending on earth. With these robes, he can now ascend to the supreme places where he will take the two robes of the Ineffable and of the First Mystery, which will bestow on him the definitive and complete gnosis, making him the perfect revealer. In his ascension, Jesus makes a significative action: the formation of the disciples following the substance. Thus, the dialogue between the revealer and the disciples—that, at a certain moment, starts as a pneumatic exegesis of the penitential hymns of the Pistis Sophia—, aims at revealing the new reality which has been formed in the disciples, following the vision of the perfect revealer: the Man of light, that is the gnostic formation of the pneumatic substance of the disciples.

Thus, both in the hermetic treatises, and in the gnostic Dialogues of revelation, the means by which the regeneration happens is, actually, the vision. More precisely, it is by the vision of the perfect revealer that the new spiritual reality of the man of light in the disciple is shaped. This is possible also because of the special relationship between the revealer and his disciples. As the *Gospel of Thomas* reminds us,[28] the Jesus contemplated by the disciples is the living Jesus, the Living born from the Living, of whom they are the spiritual sons. In other terms, between the revealer and his disciples a particular union is established from the beginning. They are, in fact, of the same substance. Therefore, the disciples belong to a large spiritual family, are philadelphians who dwell in that "city of love" of which *Marsanes* speaks and which can be found in the intellectual city of the hermetic treatises.

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[27] For more details, see *Luce e gnosi* 28–42.
[28] *Log.* 59.

Like Hermes, Jesus, too, generates the disciples as gnostics and spiritual sons. The gnostic frameworks construct this theme with the aid of stereotyped gestures, as the spiritual kiss which ties Jacob to the resurrected in the *First Apocalypse of Jacob*. After this gesture, Jacob can say: "I have seen him, as he really is, naked, he was without clothes".[29] As the *Gospel of Philip* reminds us, the perfect conceives and generates through a kiss.[30] Through this kiss, indeed, he receives that seed of light, which is capable of activating the pneumatic substance which is lying in the gnostic as a "feminine" potentiality waiting for its male counterpart. In other contexts, the gnostic dialogues use another cliché, similarly underlined by the hermetic treatises: the impossibility for the eyes of flesh to see the new pneumatic reality born as a consequence of the process of regeneration. It is the theological theme underlying the frameworks of texts such as the *Apocalypse of Peter* or *The Letter of Peter to Philip*. In the first text, for example, we find Peter who is exstatically reliving the drama of the crucifixion in its gnostic truth: the formation of the perfect saviour. In this way, the gnostic revealer and initiator is teaching the disciple the gnostic way to salvation, because those who have seen in a pneumatic vision the true nature of the Saviour (like Peter), have also seen the true nature of the Totality and, by this, have seen his true self, at the same time transforming themselves into this reality.

With its wealth of detail, the *Pistis Sophia* allows us to grasp the consequences of this particular vision better; it is a vision of gnostic's true self in the mirror of the revealer. Indeed, the disciple is now "awakened", because he has received his pneuma, which is light and life, from the Saviour. As a result of this transmission, a new reality is now acting in him: the man of light. He is bubbling, restless, standing, willing: all verbs which are typical of the theogonic process by which the Son is eternally generated and are now used to indicate the generation of the new gnostic reality. Mary Magdalene, who is the prototype of the spiritual, synthesizes the vitality of the new reality in this way: "my man of light has moved me, has joyed and bubbled in me, desiring to go out from me to penetrate you". As in the hermetic treatises, the bubbling and the joy indicate, on the one hand, that the gnostic regeneration is following a theogonic model, on the other, the spiritual emotions which are characteristic of this type of experience. So, through the vision of the revealer,

[29] NHC V 3, 57, 8.
[30] NHC II 3, 58, 33.

the disciple has received the pneuma of light which contains those spiritual seeds by which his pneumatic substance has been fertilised. In this way, the pneuma is shown both as a "male" principle, acting and fertilising, and as a "female" matter, capable of generating; two dimensions which are based on its "neutral" nature of the foundation of the being. From the gnostic point of view, indeed, it has taken the place of the intellect as the foundation of the being.

Unlike the hermetic treatises, however, the disciple's man of light now desires to penetrate not the world—which, from a gnostic point of view, is nothing but evil—but the Saviour. In this way, the gnostic treatise figuratively expresses a fundamental aspect of the gnostic process of transformation of the interior self: his wish to rejoin his celestial counterpart. Even if only in the eschaton it will be possible for the gnostic to rejoin his alter ego, his masculine counterpart, which is ontologically residing in the pleroma, it is possible to anticipate this reunion in the process of regeneration. In this way, the wish of the man of light to penetrate the Saviour dramatically expresses an idea which we have already found. The Saviour, indeed, symbolizes the totality, the universal and infinite Self, in gnostic terms, the pleroma. To reunite himself with his celestial and male counterpart, to overcome the division of the self, is possible only by reuniting himself with the universal Self.

Conclusions

The hero of the Hellenistic novels is a hero who, at the end of many vicissitudes, has not changed. In this sense, he ignores the idea of conversion. We know the exception; the Lucius of the Apuleian *Metamorphoses* with his final conversion which, in whatever way we decide to interpret, witnesses a change not only of the body of his hero, but also of his mind and life. Despite this, it is a partial exception: the vicissitudes of Lucius happen in the context of the urban life of the second century A.D., and, in a certain sense, they also help maintain the identity of this type of community life.[31] What a difference with that contemporary novel represented by the spiritual vicissitudes

[31] Cf. Th.N. Habinck, "*Lucius' Rite of Passage*", in *Materiali e discussioni per l'analisi dei testi classici* 25 (1990), 69: "His (sc. of Lucius) rite of passage becomes the audience's rite of communal identity".

of the gnostic pleroma, with its wanderings, edipical faults, divisions without reunification! Certainly, in its way, the gnostic myths are also tales of journeys and final reunions. But what a journey and what a reunion! It is, indeed, a typical journey to discover his interiority. In the gnostic perspective, the interiority, after all, is a strange place: despite the cosmic descriptions, it does not exist in itself as a town or a temple, but only in as much as one decides to return to oneself. In other words, it is a process, not a place, a reality to experience rather than a locality to arrive at or to envisage.

In this sense, the process of self-transformation which is described in gnostic texts, according to the definition of *epistrophe*, above all and before all is a return of the divided self to its ontological counterpart. To find this counterpart, however, it is not sufficient, as Plotinus teaches, to look towards the center of his interiority, where the One is; the gnostics, like the hermetics, need some support, some help, from a divinity who is merciful towards them. In other terms, the movement of gnosis is a dialogue, not a soliloque, an encounter, and not only a search. Thus, on the one hand, the gnostic and hermetic self, which is the result of the process of regeneration, seems to realize the intellectual wish, typical of the Platonic tradition, to know himself, to become what he already is. On the other hand, however, he places this search in a different, more personal conception of the divine, that is not without consequences. In his transformative process the gnostic, like the hermetic, is now required to repeat the eternal birth of the first God who is the archetypal androgyne; so, he must repeat this primordial act of generative vision by which, manifesting the fullness of his male and female counterparts, the androgynal God decides to manifest Himself through His Son. In this sense, the gnostic is invited not only to become what he already is, but also to be what he must become.

THE DEATH MOTIF IN LATE ANTIQUE *TESHUVA* NARRATIVE PATTERNS. WITH A NOTE ON ROMANS 5–8

SERGE RUZER

This paper aims at describing the place and function of the death motif in the Jewish *teshuva* narrative patterns of late antiquity. A number of representative examples will be investigated. I will try to establish cases in which there is an intrinsic connection between the repentance and the death of the penitent, and whether one can speak here of a trajectory,[1] or trajectories, along which the appraisal of this connection had been developing from the Second Temple period and on through rabbinic Judaism. Finally, in the appendix, implications for a fuller understanding of Paul's view on the subject, as put forward in the Epistle to the Romans, will be emphasized. It will be suggested that the apostle's stance on the issue may both be related to the said development and bear witness to its comparatively early stage.

Preliminary investigation of the sources suggests that the *teshuva* phenomenon may be seen as existing in three different modes:

– As penitence or repentance for an actual sin (or sins) by a person committed to a religious outlook accepted in the relevant milieu;[2]

– As conversion or dramatic "change of heart" by one who had previously been devoid of such commitment. When being discussed in a broader cultural context, conversion is often understood in terms of choosing/changing one's religious affiliation.[3] However, in most cases attested in the Jewish sources of late antiquity this type of

[1] Using the terminology of Robinson, see J.M. Robinson, "Introduction: The Dismantling and Reassembling of the Categories of New Testament Scholarship," in: J.M. Robinson and H. Koester, *Trajectories through Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 1–19.

[2] On the development of the doctrine of repentance from the Pentateuchal to the prophetic to the rabbinic modification, see, D.S. Goldstein, *Teshuba: The Evolution of the Doctrines of Sin and Repentance in Classical Jewish Thought* (Ann Arbor: St. Mary Seminary and University, 1974), 43–81.

[3] In the words of Nock (A.D. Nock, *Conversion* [Oxford: University Press, 1933], 7): "By conversion we mean the reorientation of the soul of an individual, his deliberate turning from indifference or from an earlier form of piety to another. . . ."

teshuva is not connected, at least from the point of view of the individual involved, with choosing a "new" religious affiliation;[4]

– As the eschatological conversion of the messianic era.

The present paper aims at clarifying the function(s) of the death motif in *teshuva* narrative patterns of the first two types. The last type, in which the issue is the fate of humankind (or of its chosen part) rather than that of an individual, will largely remain beyond the scope of the discussion.[5] Accordingly, when investigating Paul's views I will concentrate on statements dealing with the role of the death of an individual (every individual) in his progress towards true *teshuva*, not on the apostle's appraisal of the expiating function of the death of the Messiah. This last idea was, admittedly, of central importance for Paul, but I will leave its discussion—or more precisely, the discussion of the particular combination of those two motifs in the apostle's thought—for another occasion. The procedure is methodologically sound, as it can be shown that the concept of the atoning death was not originally connected with messianic beliefs.[6]

The case of 2 Maccabees 7

Let us start with one of the earliest narratives where the motifs of death and *teshuva* are intertwinned—namely, the martyrdom of the seven brothers and their mother at the hands of Antiochus Epiphanus in the Second Book of Maccabees, chap. 7:[7]

> (9) . . . . You accursed wretch, you dismiss us from this present life, but the King of the universe will raise us up to an everlasting renewal of life, because we have died for his laws. . . .
> (29) . . . . Accept death, so that in God's mercy I may get you back again with your brothers. . . .

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[4] It seems that this observation fully applies e.g. to Paul, of whom, as A.F. Segal ("Conversion and Messianism," in: *The Messiah*, ed. J.H. Charesworth [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993], 329) has put it, "we should not think as. . . . an apostate convert to Christianity."

[5] This limitation, as it seems, leaves out most of the Jewish apocalyptic writings from the intertestamental period.

[6] See, for example, D. Flusser, "Reflections of Jewish Messianic Beliefs in Early Christianity," in: *Messianism and Eschatology*, ed. Z. Baras (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Centre, 1983), 104 (Hebrew). The fragment from the Second Book of Maccabees discussed further on may serve as a good example of the initial lack of connection between these two concepts.

[7] The English quotation used here is that of *The Apocrypha of the Old Testament*. Revised Standard Version, ed. B.M. Metzger (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965).

> (33) And if our living Lord is angry for a little while, to rebuke and discipline us, he will again be reconciled with his own servants. . . .
> (36) For our brothers after enduring a brief suffering, have drunk of everflowing life under God's covenant. . . .
> (37) I, like my brothers, give up body and life for the laws of our fathers, appealing to God to show mercy soon to our nation and by afflictions and plagues to make you confess that he alone is God.
> (38) And through me and my brothers to bring to an end the wrath of the Almighty which has justly fallen on our whole nation.

A most telling feature of the fragment is the plurality of functions ascribed to death. On the one hand, death is presented here as being a punishment for sins (v. 33), and on the other, it is presented as having an atoning value (v. 38), both for the brothers' lot in eternity (v. 9) and for the nation's well-being on earth (v. 37–38). There is no indication whatsoever that death is instrumental for the *repentance* of the martyrs themselves. In fact, we are not told that the brothers needed to repent. As v. 37 unequivocally indicates, the brothers are suffering not on their own account but in order to expiate God's just anger toward their brethren.[8] We may say that in this part of the narrative death is seen rather as a natural milestone after which those faithful to God are awarded eternal life; but as far as the brothers' inner transformation is concerned (again, if they were really meant to undergo one) death as such is not a part of this process. Death may, at most, be seen as marking the completion of the process but it is in no way instrumental for the brothers' "change of heart."

In contrast, in the case of Antiochus the wicked, torments and afflictions are appraised as the only way to conversion (v. 37). The youngest brother's idea is not that the sight of their unwavering faithfulness to the Lord's commandments will make Antiochus recognize the God of Israel as the only true God. Rather, he believes that Antiochus' own suffering, leading to the opressor's imminent death,[9] will do the job.[10]

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[8] It seems that it is in this light that we are to understand the statement in v. 18: "For we are suffering these things. . . . because of our sins against our own God." See J. Moffatt, "The Second Book of Maccabees. Introduction," in: *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English*, ed. R.H. Charles (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), vol. 1.131.

[9] See 2 Maccabees 9. According to M.B. Dagut ("2 Maccabees and the Death of Antiochus IV Epiphanes," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 72 (1953): 149–157), the editor of the text believed Antiochus' death to have happened even sooner than it really did.

[10] It is worth noting, however, that the plurality of functions ascribed to death

First pattern: death is not instrumental for the teshuva *process*

We have seen that as early as in 2 Maccabees different patterns of penitence/death relationship may be discerned. One of those patterns, according to which death is only superficially connected with the penitence (as the deadline for repentance), surfaces again and again in later *teshuva* narratives. The talmudic account of the second century Elisha ben Abuya's fatal illness[11] may supply a fine example. R. Meir, having learned of his one-time teacher's critical condition, hastens to his bedside and tries to persuade Elisha ben Abuya, a renowned heretic, that he still has a chance to have his repentance accepted and that he must—in view of his imminent death—hurry and repent. As the story runs, Elisha wept and died. Rabbi Meir felt relief because it was his impression that Elisha had died repentant, meaning that he had managed to perform *teshuva* before his death. Examples of this kind are numerous; many of them reflect the sentiment that found its classical expression in the saying of the first-century r. Eliezer: "Repent one day before your death." (*m. Abot* 2:10). The story of r. Shimon ben Lakish[12] provides an even more telling example of lack of immediate connection between *teshuva* and death.[13] Resh Lakish was a robber who underwent a *teshuva* and thereafter led a pious, scholarly life. He died many years later, according to the version found in *Pirqe R. El.*, on the very same day as his two fellow-robbers who, had never repented. When he died he received both his and their share of the heavenly reward, while they received both their own and his share of due punishment.

Strangely enough, *teshuva* transformation has nothing to do with death even in a number of narratives where death is intrinsically connected with the sin that is supposedly being repented. I mean, first and foremost, different descriptions of the repentance of Adam. The earliest known version of it is found in *The Testament of Reuben*,[14]

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in 2 Maccabees 7 may still be observed in the account of 2 Maccabees 9: both Antiochus' suffering and his death are presented not only as essential elements of the repentance transformation, but also as a punishment, see 2 Macc 9:11–18.

[11] See *y. Hagigah* 2, 77 b–c.

[12] See *B. Mes.* 84a and *Pirqe R. El.*

[13] In this case as well as in the case of Elisha ben Abuya the *teshuva* is clearly that of the conversion type. Alternatively, r. Eliezer could be addressing either repentance or conversion-type *teshuva*, or both.

[14] See *T. Reub.* 1:9,10. Cf. *T. Jud.* 15:14. For a review of different evaluations of the complex issue of the relationship between older Jewish and later Christian

and it is reiterated, with minor variations, in the Babylonian Talmud.[15] It is stated there without the slightest ambiguity[16] that Adam's sin led to the ordaining of death as a punishment. His *teshuva* is admittedly linked with a lot of self-inflicted suffering, but nevertheless his own death plays no role in the penitence. It does not even mark the end of the process of repenting; hundreds of years will pass before Adam dies his ordained death. It is worth mentioning that in this case death, the mark of sin, is not abolished as a result of *teshuva*.[17]

The motifs of repentance and death are even more decisively divorced in Philo's thought. Unlike *T. Reub.* and rabbinical sources adopting the same approach, Philo believed Enoch, not Adam, to be the first to give actual expression to the idea of repentance, [18] which according to the rabbis had existed or "had come into the thought of God" before the creation of the world.[19] With Philo, it is not only clearly stated that the repentance of Enoch, which constitutes the prototype of every other repentance, took place many years before his death, but considerable efforts are made to show that Enoch does not die at all, and the same is true of all genuine penitents.[20] According to Philo, the following is the true meaning of the statement "*thanato apothaneisthe*" ("מות תמות") of Gen. 2:17: only if you are evil (nonrepentant?) will you die by death, otherwise you will be painlessly transformed ("*metetheke*") into an incorporeal and intelligible existence.[21]

Second pattern: Repentance or death

Let us now examine one more pattern of *teshuva* narratives, where, as in the one investigated above, the motif of death, while present,

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layers in *T. 12 Patr.*, see, for example, P.A. Robinson, "'To Stretch Out the Feet'. A Formula for Death in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 97 (1978): 369-370. What is important for the present discussion is that even scholars who tend to see *T. 12 Patr.* as mainly a Christian composition agree that the author(s) used older Jewish material. It is worth mentioning that according to P.A. Robinson ("'To Stretch Out the Feet . . .," 373–374), this evaluation specifically holds true for descriptions of death found in *T. 12 Patr.*

[15] See *b. Erub.* 18b.

[16] The Talmud refers to r. Meir as the source of the tradition.

[17] See *Pirke R. El.* 20.

[18] See Philo, *Qu. in Gen.* I, 82.

[19] See *Tanh.*, Num. Naso II; *b. Pesah.* 54a, *b. Ned.* 39b. Cf. *Midr. Tehil.*, on Ps 93:2, par. 3 (p. 207b).

[20] See *Qu. in Gen.* I, 86 (commenting on Gen. 5:24).

[21] See *Qu. in Gen.* I, 16. Cf. III, 11 (on Gen. 15:15).

never becomes part of the description of the *teshuva* process itself. The narrative pattern in question is used first in a story depicting Abba Hilkiah's praying for rain during one especially dry season in Palestine. Abba Hilkiah was a grandson of Honi ha-Meagel, another famous miracle worker who lived in the mid-first century B.C.E. The story reported in the Babylonian Talmud runs as follows:[22] When the scholars came to Abba Hilkiah's place on account of drought, both he and his wife went up to the roof to "pray, perhaps the Holy One blessed be He, will have mercy and rain will fall . . . [up there] he stood in one corner and she in another; [and] at first the clouds appeared over the corner where the wife stood." As everyone wondered why her prayers were answered more speedily, Abba Hilkiah suggested the following explanation, "It may have to do with certain robbers in our neighbourhood; I prayed that they might die, but she prayed that they might repent [and they did repent]." In tractate *Berakoth* of the Babylonian Talmud[23] the same story is told about r. Meir (second century C.E.) and his wife, and finally, a third century sage by name r. Zera (this time he himself and not his female *alter ego*) is reported[24] to show friendship to "some lawless men. . . . in order to lead them to repent" and not to die.[25] It must be noted that according to the Talmud the rabbis from r. Zera's neighbourhood were, at least at first, annoyed at his action.

In this narrative pattern death is seen as the ultimate punishment for the wicked; it is actually placed in opposition to *teshuva*. That kind of opposition may be seen as a residue of the biblical belief in God's justice being delivered in this world.[26] Of course, within this approach the death of righteous ones constitutes a serious problem—the more so when the righteous one in question is none other than Moses himself.

It has been shown that the need to explain and justify Moses' death can be discerned already in the biblical account itself or, more precisely, in different traditions that found their way into the biblical

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[22] See *b. Taan.* 23b. All English talmudic quotations in this paper are from the Soncino Edition of the Babylonian Talmud (tr. and ed. by I. Epstein).

[23] See *b. Ber.* 10a.

[24] See *b. Sanh.* 37a.

[25] In clear reference to Ezek. 33:11.

[26] The outlook described by D. Flusser ("A New Sensitivity in Judaism and the Christian Message," in: *Judaism and the Sources of Christianity* [Jerusalem: Magnes, 1988], 119) as "gallant" simplicity of the Old Testament world image.

account in Num 20:2–13 and Deut 1:37, 3:26, 4:21, 32:48–52.[27] Moreover, the bulk of evidence suggests that the need to solve the problem lost nothing of its acuteness during the intertestamental period and in the rabbinical Midrash.[28] The "explanations" offered vary from insistence on Moses' guilt,[29] to presenting his death as the result not of his sin but of Adam's,[30] to claims that he never really died.[31]

It is worth mentioning that the death of Moses was seen as even more problematic than that of the Patriarchs. In a number of sources it is stated unequivocally that Moses, the man who spoke with the *Shekina* face to face, was superior to Abraham (who, in turn, was greater than other men);[32] hence, on the one hand, the importance of the statement that even Moses did not escape death and, on the other, attempts to stress the difference between the most outstanding circumstances of his departure from earthly existence and burial, and those of Abraham.[33]

I have discussed a number of representative *teshuva* narratives. The death theme is present in all of them: in some death is seen as punishment (either for actual transgressions or for Adam's sin), in other,

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[27] See, for example, S.E. Loewenstamm, "The Death of Moses," *Tarbiz* 27 (1958): 142–146.

[28] For a thorough investigation of the issue, see, J. Goldin, "The Death of Moses: An Exercise in Midrashic Transposition," in: *Love and Death in the Ancient Near East. Essays in Honor of M.H. Pope*, eds. J.H. Marks and R.M. Good (Guilford, Conn.: Four Quarters Pub. Co., 1987), 219–225.

[29] See, for example, *I Petirat Moshe*, 117; cf. *Yal.* 821.

[30] This tradition is attested in *Deut. Rab.*, where the following dialogue between God and Moses is reported. Moses: Why have you ordained for me to die? God: Because of the sin of the first man (Adam) who brought death to the world.

[31] See *Sifre Deut.* 357, p. 428; *b. Sota* 13b. This view was known already to Philo and also to Josephus who states (*Antiquities* IV, 326) that Moses has purposedly written of himself in the Torah that he died to prevent the children of Israel from saying that because of his surpassing virtue he had returned to God. See J. Goldin, "The Death of Moses. . . .", 220 and n. 11.

[32] And even the angels, see, D. Flusser, "Messianology and Christology in the Epistle to the Hebrews," in: *Judaism and the Sources of Christianity*, 254–255 and n. 35, 36.

[33] See, (to mention only two earliest examples of evidence), *Pseudo Philo* 19:16; Philo, *De Vita Mosis* II, 291. Philo's use of the word "*propatoros*" here ("*hos oud' en tapho ton propatoron ekedeuthe*"—"he was not laid to rest in the tomb of his forefathers" [Eng. tr. acc. to *Loeb Classics* IV: 595]) is rather telling: Moses is compared not with the rest of Israel but specifically with the Patriarchs (Cf. *b. B. Bat.* 17a). On the other hand, an alternative trend—namely, the narratives of Abraham's death that follow the model of Moses—is also attested. See E. Glickler Chazon, "Moses' Struggle for His Soul: A Prototype for the Testament of Abraham, the Greek Apocalypse of Ezra, and the Apocalypse of Sedrach," *The Second Century. A Journal of Early Christian Studies* v. 5, 3 (1985/1986): 151–164.

death is presented as the ultimate deadline for repentance/conversion or (as with Philo) less dramatically, as the natural termination of the existence of man's irrational soul. All these differences notwithstanding, the narrative patterns investigated by now have something in common: death of the penitent is not instrumental for the *teshuva* transformation itself;[34] this transformation does not take place via death. And a further common feature: the finality of *teshuva*—be it of repentance or, as in most of our examples, of the conversion type—is never questioned, the possibility of further sinning is never raised. The combination of those two features may be seen as a distinctive characteristic of this group of *teshuva* narrative patterns.

Third pattern: Death as a neccessary element of teshuva *transformation*

Let us now turn to narrative patterns of a different kind. In the martyrdom episode from the Second Book of Maccabees we found an indication that at least in certain cases *teshuva* may be intrinsically connected with the dying of the penitent: the *teshuva* in question there was the hoped-for conversion of the martyrs' tormentor, Antiochus. Admittedly the statement to this effect was made in rather extreme circumstances; one may certainly brand it as wishful thinking. Nevertheless, I will try to demonstrate that this attitude was in no way restricted to the repentance or conversion of a hated foreign ruler.

As a starting point for our discussion, let us note that in the passage from 2 Maccabees 7 investigated earlier, the essence of conversion lay in the repudiation of idolatry.[35] In later layers of the Jewish tradition we also find statements to the effect that in the case of the sin of idolatry repentance—i.e., renouncing the sin—is not sufficient; one who repents must also die. Further, the question is asked: "does one not die on renouncing sins other than idolatry?" It turns out that there is another kind of transgression—namely, lust—repudiation of which may necessitate death of the penitent as the ultimate stage of *teshuva*. The example the Talmud gives here is that of the *teshuva* of a certain (r.) Elazar ben Dordia. It is told of Eliezer b. Dordia that there was no harlot in the world whom he did not pay a visit. All his praying, crying and lamenting his pitiful moral condition was in

[34] Of course, if one does not count the fear of death.
[35] 2 Macc 7:37.

vain. Only when he finally died, only then was his repentance fulfilled/accepted. The suggested explanation is that "he did die in that case too, since he was so much addicted to immorality, it is as [if he had been guilty of] *minuth* (herecy? idolatry?)."[36]

The impression one gets from this story is that idolatry and lust, as sinful inclinations, are such powerful addictions that in order to really free himself from them a man has to rid himself altogether of his earthly existence. It is worth noting that Origen, in the first half of the third century, elaborating on the basic presuppositions of his exegetical theory—theory that according to his own evidence, was strongly influenced by the "views of the Hebrews"[37]—also speaks of an essential connection between lust and idolatry,

> . . . . just as illicit and unlawful love may happen to the outer man as that, for instance, he should love a harlot or adulteress instead of his bride or his wife; so also the inner man, that is to say, the soul come to attach his love not to its lawful Bridegroom, who is the Word of God, but to some seducer or adulterer. . . . And this spiritual love of soul does flame out (*sic*), as we have taught, sometimes towards certain spirits of evil, and sometimes towards the Holy Spirit . . .[38]

Further on, in the course of the same talmudic discussion, which started with the case of Elazar ben Dordia, we come upon an attempt to clarify and compare the addicting effects of idolatry and lust. As the story runs, one day r. Hanina and r. Jonathan were walking together and had to choose between two paths, one leading by the place of idolatry, the other by the harlot's place. Hanina suggested taking the path by the place of idolatry, the inclination toward which had already been abolished in Israel.[39] In contrast, r. Jonathan's suggestion was, "Let us go by the harlot's place and defy our inclination and have our reward." The two inclinations are again coupled here, but compared with the starting point of the discussion a number of important developments have taken place. First, it is claimed that the inclination toward idolatry has been abolished and the only dreadful sin that still hovers is lust. Second, this time it is not some especially lustful marginal individual of the kind of Eliezer b. Dordia;

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[36] *b. Abod. Zar.* 17a.

[37] See Origen, *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, Prologue, 1.

[38] Origen, *Commentary . . .*, Prologue, 2. The English quotation is from the Origen, *The Song of Songs. Commentary and Homilies*, ed. and tr. by R.P. Lawson (Ancient Christian Writers; London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1957), 30.

[39] *b. Abod. Zar.* 17b.

here it is two highly respectable sages, r. Hanina and r. Jonathan, who face the challenge. The problem of Elazar ben Dordia is presented here, in the absence of the danger of idolatry, as the problem of human nature in general, of everyone.[40] It must be noted that this time the outcome is much less dramatic—r. Hanina and r. Jonathan did not have to die because they did manage to defy the sinful inclination.

Before proceeding to a discussion of the manageability of lust, it must be noted that in rabbinical sources lust is in many instances identified (since the inclination for idolatry is declared to have been abolished) with the Evil Instinct (or Evil Impulse—*yetzer ha-ra*) itself. Urbach stresses that according to the Sages there are other expressions of *yetzer ha-ra* as well—e.g., anger. Nevertheless, most examples he refers to (actually, all except one) speak of lust.[41] It is not my intention here to tackle the problem and try to decide to what extent the identification of *yetzer ha-ra* with lust characterized different stages in the development of rabbinical thought. It will suffice for the purposes of this paper to state that sexual temptations are presented in a number of *teshuva* narratives as so deeply embedded in human nature that repentance alone is not enough to repudiate them; only death will achieve that. Urbach supplies fine illustrations of the idea that nothing short of the actual death of the penitent will suffice, not even *memento mori*, the constant pious recalling of the day of death; evil inclination is to be found even among the participants in funeral processions.[42] An additional telling example may be found in the Babylonian Talmud, where an opinion is expressed that, at least in certain cases, the options are either to die or to succumb to lust; there is no *tertium quid*.[43]

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[40] One may see this as one more expression of a tendency, discerned first during the Second Temple period, to abolish a clear-cut distinction between the pious and saintly on the one hand and the wicked on the other, and to recognize the basic solidarity of all people involved in the covenantal relationship with God (and maybe even of all humanity). See D. Flusser, "A New Sensitivity. . . .", 118–119.

[41] See E. Urbach, *The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs* (Jerusalem: Magnus Press, 1979), 476–477. It is worth noting that in some instances, as in 4 Ezra 3:21, 4:30, it is stated that Adam is the "progenitor" of *yetzer ha-ra*. See, W.D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (London: S.P.C.K., 1948), 20–21.

[42] See E. Urbach, *The Sages. . . .*, 477.

[43] *b. Sanh.* 75a. It must be stressed again that we are not addressing here the atoning function of death, dealt with extensively in the rabbinical literature (death as an expression of God's justice). Instead, the focus is on the role of death in the transformation of the self undergoing the *teshuva* process.

Granting that for the rabbis sexual desire, being so deeply embedded in human nature, might have more or less adequately represented *yetzer ha-ra*,[44] it should be noted that in the narratives from *b. Abod. Zar.* discussed above two different motifs may be discerned: (a) the impulse is fought and overcome (as in the case of r. Hanina and r. Jonathan); (b) the Old Enemy (using Davies' designation) is never completely defeated until death comes. Or, as Hillel put it, "Do not trust yourself till the very day of your death."[45]

In contradistinction to the first two groups of examples investigated earlier in this paper, in some of the narratives belonging to the third group the question of the finality of *teshuva* is raised. It seems that the importance of death for the *teshuva* process itself is enhanced here by the feeling of general frailty of human nature and, consequently, the feeling that no repentance guarantees that tomorrow one will not again have to fight the same battle.[46] Hence, statements are abundant to the effect that God will eventually destroy the Evil Impulse, but it will happen only beyond death, in the world to come. For example, we find a statement of this kind traced to r. Judah (150 C.E.) in the Babylonian Talmud: "In the world to come God will bring the Evil Impulse and slay it in the presence of the righteous and the wicked."[47]

It may be shown that this feeling of the incompleteness of *teshuva*, be it of the repentance or of the conversion kind, was not restricted to rabbinic (Pharisaic?) circles alone but was of quite a general character. Studies of Qumran literature[48] by, among others, Kuhn and Sanders have shown that regulations concerning the transgressions of insiders are abundant, "even where the consciousness of the presence of salvation is most pronounced, the pious of Qumran were always conscious of the 'not yet'."[49] The covenanters' consciousness

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[44] This was also the conclusion of Davies, according to whom "the evil impulse, ... it seems, ... was especially, though not exclusively, connected with sexual sins, sexual passion or lust; it was the force that led men particularly to unchastity and to idolatry". See W.D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic. . . .*, 21–22.

[45] *m. Abot* 2:4. See also E. Urbach, *The Sages. . . .*, 476.

[46] Cf. *Acts of Paul and Thecla* 25, in: *New Testament Apocrypha*, ed. E. Hennecke, revised edition by W. Schneemelcher (2 vols.; Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster Press, 1991), 2.243.

[47] *b. Sukk.* 52a; H.L. Strack, P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrash* (4 vols.; Munchen, 1922–1928), 4.482.

[48] Especially relevant here are *Hodayot* (*Thanksgiving Hymns*). The principal passages studied for this purpose are IQH 3:19 36; 11:3–14; 11:15–36; 15.

[49] E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983),

of present salvation, reached by entering the community, did not extend to considering that they had already been saved from human frailty. According to Sanders the covenanters' stance on the validity of their present conversion (the one that has brought them into the community) may be summed up in the following fashion:

– Being in the community (having undergone conversion) is the decisive factor in salvation, and the members are conscious of being saved;

– This salvation has not removed them from being fleshly; they remain, in this sense, in human weakness and iniquity;

– This human weakness will be overcome [only] at the *eschaton*.[50]

The sources this paper deals with differ in their stress on particular rather than general *eschaton* – namely, death of an individual as the event in which his *teshuva* becomes final. As it is said (ascribed to r. Yohanan) in *Gen. Rab.*,

> "And lo, very good" (Gen 1:31)? It is death. Why was the death ordained [even] for the pious ones? [Because] all the time when they are [still] alive they spend fighting their evil impulse. [Only] when they die, they [may at last] rest.[51]

Preliminary summing up

The texts examined so far demonstrate, as regards understanding the role of death in the *teshuva* process, a plurality of approaches. The mass of the material may be reconceptualized[52] in terms of movements, "trajectories" from the Second Temple period through late antiquity. One stream, or trajectory of thought moves via older concepts of death as punishment, on to death as atonement for sins. Another, proceeds via seeing death as a deadline only for repentance or even (as with Philo) as a natural event completely irrelevant for *teshuva*. There is yet another sequence of developments, starting with the intuition that in some cases evil inclinations are so embedded in

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280. Cf. H.W. Kuhn, *Enderwartung und gegenwartiges Heil. Untersuchungen zu den Gemeindeliedern von Qumran* (SUNT 4; Gottingen, 1966), 88.

[50] See E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian. . . .*, 281.

[51] *Gen. Rab.* 9:5. The English quotation is from the *Midrash Rabbah*, ed. and tr. H. Freedman (London: Soncino Press, 1939).

[52] Here again I follow Robinson's terminology, see, J.M. Robinson, "Introduction . . .," 13.

the penitent's nature that *teshuva* alone does not suffice; and advancing via recognition that in fact, as far as the Evil Impulse (identified in many cases with lust) is concerned, this is a general human condition, so that no *teshuva* can be final. Hence, death is seen as the only true way out of sinful existence.[53]

Appendix: Paul on death and repentance

Let us now check Paul's stance on the issue as it finds expression in Romans 5–8. Again, what is addressed in the following remarks is not the apostle's *kerygma* of the atoning death of the Messiah,[54] but his views on the role of death in every individual's advance towards conversion.

Rom 5:6–11: For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. . . . being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. . . . And not only so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

5:12: Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death passed to all men, for that all have sinned. . . .

5:14: . . . . death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression. . . .

6:6–7: . . . . the body of sin must be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For [only] he that is dead is freed from sin. . . .

6:20–23: For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. . . . For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. . . .

7:23–24: But I see another law in my members. . . . the law of sin. . . . O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

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[53] One wonders whether an additional link between death and repentance discussed by M. Ber may be of relevance here. Ber showed that *teshuva* praxes of famous penitents are usually described in rabbinical sources in terms of mourning. See M. Ber, "On Penances of Penitents in the Literature of Hazal," *Zion* 46 (1981): 159–181 (Hebrew).

[54] See Rom 5:3–9; cf. 2 Macc 7:37.

> 8:18: For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.[55]

We may see that in Paul's Epistle a number of different (sometimes conflicting) streams of thought concerning death are combined together. In Rom 5:12, 14 we find an echo of the claim that death is not necessarily a punishment for actual sins, it befalls everyone, even the pious and saintly. In the Epistle, as in the Midrashic elaborations discussed above, Moses serves as the most elevated example of someone pious and saintly who dies nevertheless. Paul's explanation is that (even!) Moses dies because of Adam's transgression—reiteration of a claim attested later in *Deut. Rab.*[56]

In Rom 6:6–7 Paul claims that "the body of sin must be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For [only] he that is dead is freed from sin."[57] We find the same motif again in Rom 7:23–24, "But I see another law in my members.... the law of sin.... O wretched man that I am![58] who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"[59] All this is in agreement with the tendency to see in death the ultimate seal of a true *teshuva*, a tendency that has been discerned in a number of rabbinical sources discussed above.

Conversely, in Rom 6:20–23 death is seen as the result of actual sins, as due punishment. Finally, in Rom 8:18 an echo of 2 Macc

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[55] The English quotation here is from the Authorised Version of the Bible.

[56] As H.W. Hollander and J. Holleman ("The Relationship of Death, Sin and Law in 1 Cor 15:56," *Novum Testamentum* 35/3 (1993), 275) have shown, by presenting mortality as something going back to the first man Adam, Paul shows familiarity with contemporary Jewish traditions (Philo and Jewish apocalyptic authors are quoted in this respect). However, what makes for a particular link between Paul's reasoning in Rom 5:14 and *Deut.Rab.* is the fact that in both cases the claim of Adam's responsibility is made while discussing the problem of Moses' mortality.

[57] Cf. 1 John 5:16. See S. Cox, "The Sin Unto death (1 John 5:16)," *The Expositor* 2/1 (1881), 423.

[58] Whether Paul really means himself here and and whether the statement is meant to apply even after conversion remains an open question. For a thorough discussion of the issue and of the state of research, see J. Lambrecht, *The Wretched "I" and its Liberation: Paul in Romans 7 and 8* (Louvain: Peters Press, 1992). A possibility has also been raised that the outcry "O wretched man that I am!" reflects a later stage in Paul's thinking when the place of the initial upheaval in belief (following the experience on the road to Damascus) was taken by a more sober contemplation which included the acceptance of the prospect of dying. See R. Mackintosh, "The Roots of St. Paul's Doctrine of Sin," *The Expositor* 8/5 (1914), 449–455.

[59] Cf. Rom 8:10.

7:36 may be heard—suffering and death are presented here as a sure path leading to eternal bliss.

Suggested conclusions

It may be seen that the same plurality of conceptions discerned in the *teshuva* narratives discussed in this paper characterizes also the apostle's thinking. Hence, to Davies' claim that in the Epistle to the Romans "we are justified in tracing a direct connection with the [rabbinic] doctrine of the Two Impulses," especially of the "evil yetzer,"[60] we may add that Paul's insistence on the death of an individual[61] as a precondition of his true conversion is to be appraised vis-a-vis the more general tendencies[62] in Jewish thought investigated in this paper.[63]

The appearance of this central motif as well as of a number of alternative suggestions on the issue, in the Epistle, written in the mid-first century[64] bears testimony to those developments (trajectories) in appreciation of the role of death in the *teshuva* process that may be observed in Jewish thought starting from the Second Temple period and continuing on into late antiquity.

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[60] See W.D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic. . . .*, 23–24. Davies, it seems, believes that Paul identifies the Evil Impulse with lust.

[61] With all due modifications—with Paul, the individual does not actually die, but dies and rises in Christ!

[62] Those developments were, in the past, sometimes too easily dismissed. So, for instance, T. Barrose ("Death and Sin in Saint Paul's Epistle to the Romans," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 15 (1953), 453) still claimed that the ideas of the Judaism (concerning the role of death) in which Paul was educated practically did not differ from the notions attested in the Old Testament.

[63] It has been noted in this paper that the feeling of incompleteness of *teshuva*, of impossibility of really successful *teshuva* for one who is still alive, was of quite general character and could be discerned among different Jewish groups of the late Second Temple period. On the other hand, a claim has been made for a particular affinity between Paul's stance on the issue and the Qumranite notion that man cannot save himself. See D.R. Schwartz, "Law and Truth: On Qumran-Sadducean and Rabbinic Views of Law," in: *The Dead Sea Scrolls. Forty Years of Research*, eds. D. Dimant and U. Rappaport (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 239.

[64] In spite of the obvious centrality of the concept of conversion/salvation via death (with the Messiah), these alternative appraisals of death do survive in post-Pauline Christian thought, where physical death is still sometimes presented as the destiny of those who have not converted. See, for instance, *Acts of Paul and Thecla* 37–38, 2.245–246.

FROM REPENTANCE TO PENANCE IN EARLY CHRISTIANITY: TERTULLIAN'S *DE PAENITENTIA* IN CONTEXT

GUY G. STROUMSA

The ritualization of repentance, the public expression of a deeply intimate transformation of the self, is a matter of central significance in any religion. In Christianity, the development in the first centuries of *paenitentia secunda*, an activity public by nature, and its progressive transformation, in the high Middle Ages, into private confessional practices, remains one of the most complex problems of Church history.[1] Much of what has been written, however, should be read within the context of the polemic between Catholics and Protestants. For Luther, it was inconceivable that the teaching of Jesus Christ and the Apostles would have been at the root of the corrupt penitential practices of the Catholics. For him, the reform of these practices remains, precisely, "*optima paenitentia nova vita.*" Thanks to Melanchton, who showed him how the etymology of *metanoiete*, ("Repent!") entailed change rather than penance, Luther was able to insist on the ethical dimensions of the conversion demanded by both John the Baptist and Paul.[2]

Around the end of the second century, the demand for individual repentance underwent a mutation, and was transformed into the ritualized public penance.[3] I propose here to offer some remarks on

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[1] The *confessio secreta* is mentioned as early as the sixth century by Leo I (*Epistle* 168.2). For a recent study of post-Tridentine Catholic confession, see J. Delumeau, *L'aveu et le pardon: les difficultés de la confession, XIII^e–XVII^e siècle* (Paris, 1990). For an anthropological approach, see T. Assad, *Genealogies of Religion* (Baltimore, London, 1993), 97–105.

[2] See W. Robertson Smith, *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, 45, quoted by A.H. Dirksen, The New Testament Concept of Metanoia (Washington, D.C., 1932), 3. "Metanoiete, id est, poenitentiam agite," writes Luther, as he translates *metanoein* as "sich bessern" in his first translation of the New Testament. It is only later that he will use the expression "Buss tun."

[3] The question has been much studied; for a general introduction, see for instance C. Vogel, *Le pécheur et la pénitence dans l'Eglise ancienne* (Paris, 1965), as well as the anthology of early Christian texts edited by H. Karpp, *La Pénitence* (Neuchâtel, 1970; German version, Zurich, 1970). See also K. Zinniel, "Busse," *HrwG* 2, 188–190; H. Emonds, B. Porschmann, "Busse," *RAC* 2, 802–812; D. Aune, "Repentance,"

this transformation. The problem is crucial in the complex relationships between the anthropology developed by early Christian thinkers and the new social framework within which the early Christians developed their identity. I shall then offer a reading of Tertullian's *de paenitentia*, one of the first texts devoted to the topic of *paenitentia secunda*.

I. *Metanoia*

1. In a seminal work published long ago, Rafaele Pettazzoni analyzed the confession of sins in various religions throughout the world, focusing upon the religious systems of the ancient Near East. The chapter on Israel, in particular, analyses various kinds of confession of sins: individual, collective, and periodical (i.e., the rituals of *Yom Kippur*, based upon Lev 16, their Canaanite origins, and their parallels in the Babylonian *akitu*).[4] The great importance of Pettazzoni's work was to show that the confession of sins was a central element of any religious system. How should a community react to an individual who has deviated from the norms of behavior through which the community defines itself? Fritz Stolz has recently redefined the problem, by speaking of "normal abnormality."[5] "Normal," since such a deviation from mores or laws developed or accepted by the religious community is of course a universal phenomenon, to be observed in the most different societies. By such a deviation, the individual not only sins, i.e., counters the expectation or will of the divinity, or behaves against the rules of heaven, but also crosses the symbolic boundaries through which the community defines itself. For the sinner to be reintegrated into this community, a ritual process will have to be developed, which is in some ways similar to the rites demanded in order to join the community. One can speak, then, of rites de passage parallel to those of conversion.

We shall see how the traditional ways of expressing repentance in

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ER 12, 337–342; P. Adnès, "Pénitence (repentir et sacrement)," *DS* 12, 943–1004; in *TRE*, no less than five articles are devoted to *Busse*. One can still consult E. Amann, "Pénitence-repentir" and "Pénitence-sacrement," *DTC* 12, 742–748 and 748–845.

[4] R. Pettazzoni, *La confessione dei peccati* (vol. I, Bologna, 1929, vol. II, Bologna, 1935). I have not been able to see the third volume. See further J.P. Assmussen, "Beichte," *TRE* 5, 411ff., and Chr. Auffahrt, "Beichte," *HrwG* 2, 116–119.

[5] F. Stolz, *Christentum* (Göttingen, 1985), 80–89.

ancient Israel and in Second Temple Judaism were broken or dismantled in the new religious system emerging with Christianity. The Jewish rituals of repentance and of purification needed after the pollution of the person through sin were mainly of two kinds. Those which centered around *Yom Kippur* were mainly of a public character, while baptism, a private act of purification through immersion into water, could be performed at any time. Now *Yom Kippur* had totally disappeared from early Christianity—perhaps because the whole ethos of the new religion centered upon repentance from sins, thus allowing no special, limited place for one single day, hallowed as it may be, devoted to the repentance from sins. As to baptism, it did not disappear, to be sure, from the new religion. On the contrary, its central importance was fostered as it became exclusively identified with a ritual of conversion. Baptism, however, now became a one-time ritual, and could no longer be used repeatedly, as in Judaism, as a rite of repentance, permitting purification and offering religious and ethical rehabilitation, and reintegration into the community. During the first two centuries, the Christians developed new ways permitting and symbolizing the sinner's reintegration into the community. In a sense, these ways offer a parallel to the ritual patterns developed for conversion, and they reflect the search for a new equilibrium. As they found their way from a Jewish sect to a new, independent religious system and community, the early Christians had to invent a new ritualization of repentance. In this sense, the passage from repentance to penance reflects the passage from a *communio sanctorum* to the catholic *ecclesia*, a much broader community of believers, in which even sinners have their place.

2. The clear relationship between the individual and society regarding the character of repentance is stated in the earliest stages of Christian literature, which reflect a sectarian movement not yet quite distinct from Judaism. In Matthew 18:15–18 (alluding to Deuteronomy 19:15) it is stated that at least two witnesses are needed in order to prove guilt. Hence the possibility, or even the necessity of a public aspect of repentance. As is well known, religious as well as political groups and sects feel a need, which sometimes grows to an obsession, to establish rules regulating attitudes towards deviants or heretics. The smaller the sect, the harsher the rules. An obvious instance is provided by the Qumran texts dealing with discipline within the sect. When Christianity became a religion with universalist ambitions, did

it retain some attitudes inherited from its sectarian beginnings?

The importance attributed by Christianity to repentance finds its obvious origin in the predication of John the Baptist: "Repent ye (*metanoiete*), for the kingdom of heaven is at hand . . . I indeed baptise you with water unto repentance (*eis metanoian*). . . ."[6] One is thus dealing here with a Jewish context, a fact known by all scholars who, in the footsteps of Paul de Lagarde, understand *metanoia* as alluding to the Hebrew root *shuv*, and to the many examples of its composites in the Hebrew Bible—*pace* Wellhausen, who could state in lapidary fashion: "*Metanoia* ist unjüdisch."[7] Pettazzoni had been able to show that repentance was linked to the confession of sins in the religion of Israel. This link was retained in Second Temple Judaism. Indeed, Jesus' name itself directly refers to the remission of sins: "Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins." (Mt 1:21). Elsewhere, Jesus shows explicit consciousness of the centrality of the remission of sins: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."[8]

3. It should be pointed out here that while the idea of a confession of sins is found in vastly different religious contexts, the problem is not phrased everywhere in the same terms. In Greek religion, for instance, the concept of *metanoia* does not play a role. There, impurity does not have the ethical dimensions of sin that are characteristic of Second Temple Judaism.[9] There is no denying the presence of *metanoia* in pre-Christian Greek literature, but the fact remains that the status of sin and culpability in the Greek world is significantly different from their status in the biblical tradition.

The nature, and possible Jewish origin of *metanoia* have in the past fed some heated arguments among classical philologists. About the call to repentance in the last chapters of the *Poimandres*, (esp. chapter 28), Eduard Norden had noted that the importance of *metanoia* in this text probably reflected a Jewish or "oriental" influence—a

[6] Mt 3:2, 11; cf. Mc 1:1–8; Lc 3:1–8. For a discussion, see for instance H.-G. Schönfeld, *Metanoia: ein Beitrag zum Corpus Hellenisticum Novi Testamenti* (Dissertation; Heidelberg, 1970).

[7] Quoted by Schönfeld, *op. cit.*, 10.

[8] Mt 26:28; cf. Acts 2:38. Cf. J. Murphy O'Connor, "Péché et communauté dans le Nouveau Testament," *RB* 74 (1967), 161–193, esp. 162–163.

[9] See R. Parker, *Miasma: Pollution and Purification in Early Greek Religion* (Oxford, 1983).

statement strongly opposed by Werner Jaeger.[10] As is well-known, *hamartia* in classical Greek means error rather than sin. This fact much weakens Jaeger's opinion. Any argument passing directly from the word to the concept, and calling attention to linguistic parallels while ignoring their contexts, sounds suspect, even suspicious. It almost seems to reflect an attempt to ignore the direct Jewish Palestinian background of nascent Christianity. The ethical dimension is central to the repentance preached by John the Baptist. The same ethical character of a practice of cultic purity is found also in Essene baptism.[11] In the new religious sensitivity developed in Second Temple Judaism, ethics stands at the very heart of religious life.[12] There is no need to insist on the fact that such an ethical demand is absent from Hellenic systems of thought, even if one can speak about a *metanoia* in mystery cults.[13]

Yet, despite the obvious roots of the concept of *metanoia* in the New Testament, the origin of the word itself remains a problem. The word, for instance, is not used in *LXX* in order to translate *shuv* and its composites. Those are usually translated by *epistrephein*, while *metanoiein* represents *niḥam* and its cognates. One finds *metanoia*, however, in Hellenistic Jewish literature. In *Joseph and Aseneth*, for instance, a hypostatic *Metanoia*, a figure similar to Dame Wisdom, Sophia, appears as "the daughter of the Most High."[14]

4. In the Mediterranean and Near Eastern world during the Hellenistic period, and then under the Roman Empire, one can observe some radical transformations of the categories of religious thought. In a

[10] Norden had made this statement in his *Agnostos Theos: Untersuchungen zur Formgeschichte religiöser Rede* (Leipzig, 1913). Jaeger established his attack against this judgment upon a Greek "pagan" reference to *metanoia*, as "the feeling of he who is mistaken." According to him, this is very close to the New Testament meaning of the term as "repentance." See C. Praechter, ed., *Kèbètos Pinax, Cebetis Tabula* (Leipzig, 1893) 10, 139. On Norden's approach, see B. Kytzler, K. Rudolph, J. Rüpke, eds., *Eduard Norden (1868–1941): ein deutscher Gelehrter jüdischer Herkunft* (Palingenesia 49; Stuttgart, 1994).

[11] D. Flusser, "John's Baptism and the Dead Sea Sect," in his *Jewish Sources in Early Christianity* (Tel Aviv, 1979), 81–112, esp. 84ff. (Hebrew).

[12] See D. Flusser, "A New Sensitivity in Judaism and the Christian Message," in his *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity* (Jerusalem, 1988), 469–489.

[13] This was suggested by R. Joly, in his edition of the *Pastor of Hermas*, a crucial text for the evolution of repentance in early Christianity; see R. Joly, ed., transl., *Le Pasteur d'Hermas* (SC 53bis; Paris, 1968).

[14] See A. Standhartinger, *Das Frauenbild im Judentum der hellenistischen Zeit* (AGAJU 26; Leiden, 1995).

classical study, Arthur Darby Nock long ago analyzed these transformations, describing in particular the birth and development of the idea of conversion in the Hellenistic and Roman world.[15] One could now choose religious identity, and leave the ethnic and religious group to which one belonged from birth, in order to join another one. For the Roman period, John North has recently followed in Nock's footsteps, by insisting on what he calls a "supermarket of religions" in the Empire.[16] *Epistrophè, conversio*, are ambiguous terms. They describe the passage from one religion to another, but also the passage to philosophical or even mystical patterns of thought or way of life.

To be sure, conversion existed in first century Judaism—although it might not have been as widespread as sometimes thought.[17] Conversion to Judaism demands baptism; yet, baptism, i.e., purification through immersion, remains essentially identified with repentance of sins.

In the earliest strata of Christianity, baptism became endowed with a new meaning: it would now almost exclusively delineate the passage to the new religious identity. In a sense, one could perhaps say that from being essentially concerned with *paenitentia*, it became the ritual of *conversio* par excellence. This does not mean, of course, that the repentance from sins disappeared from Christian baptism. Quite the contrary: repentance from sins is so essential in Christian baptism that it became integrated into the profession of faith: Jesus saves. The nature of baptism thus underwent a radical transformation, as exemplified, in particular, in Paul's writings. Baptism is certainly central to Paul's thought (see, for instance, Romans 6:1–11). But Paul insists much more upon salvation, i.e., the victory over death brought about by baptism, than upon repentance. In Paul's theology, indeed, *metanoia* is included within *pistis*. A *caveat* is in order here: in the New Testament, *metanoia* and *epistrophè* are often synonymous terms, as in Paul's speech in front of king Agrippa (Acts 26:20): one must "repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance" (*metanoiein kai epistrophein epi ton theon axia tès metanoias erga prassontas*).

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[15] A.D. Nock, *Conversion: the Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (Oxford, 1933). See also A. Momigliano, "Religion in Athens, Rome, and Jerusalem in the First Century B.C.", in his *On Pagans, Jews, and Christians* (Middletown, Ct., 1987), 74–91.

[16] J. North, "The Development of Religious Pluralism," in T. Rajak, J. Lieu, J. North, eds., *The Jews among Pagans and Christians* (London, 1992), 174–193.

[17] For a recent re-evaluation of the question, see Sh.J.D. Cohen in *JQR* 86 (1996), 429–434.

Despite the importance of repentance, Christian baptism, since it is above all a confession of faith, must remain a one-time event. There is only one baptism possible for the Christian, since it defines the conversion to the new religious identity. This highlights an essential difference between the Jewish and the Christian attitudes towards repentance and conversion. Despite its obvious character, this observation does not seem to be widely recognized.[18] While Jewish baptism deals especially with the internal regulation of religion, the reintegration into a state of purity, Christian baptism focuses upon the passage from within to without, i.e., the acceptance within the community.[19] Early Christian *identity* was defined in terms profoundly different from those defining Jewish identity after the first century. Christianity was a *religio illicita*, and the communities were often constituted of religious *virtuosi*, to use Max Weber's expression. In such intense communities, the reintegration of fallen members is notoriously difficult. Outlawed communities, moreover, cannot exert any real kind of pressure or sanction. Thus Augustine could explain, towards the end of the fourth century, why the clandestine Manichaeans were unable to force even their *electi* to repentance and penance.[20] In the case of ancient Christianity, one should add the intensity of eschatological expectations, the belief in the imminent end of the world and second coming of the Saviour: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." (Mark 1:15).

Since baptism functioned for them as the ritual of conversion, and since Yom Kippur had disappeared from their ritual, the early Christian had to develop a new system permitting the solemn reintegration of serious sinners into the community. Baptism was identified as an act of *metanoia*. The act of re-integration into the community, therefore, would be a second *metanoia*, a *paenitentia secunda*. This new developement is particularly well exemplified in Tertullian's *De paenitentia*, where we can follow some key elements of a new ritualisation of repentance.

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[18] See for instance K. Berger, *Historische Psychologie des Neuen Testaments* (Stuttgart, 1991), which does not devote special discussion to repentance.

[19] On repentance in Rabbinic thought, see for instance E.E. Urbach, *The Sages* (Jerusalem, 1975), ch. 15 and bibliography. Among older studies, see esp. A. Büchler, *Studies in Sin and Atonement in First-Century Judaism* (London, 1958).

[20] Augustine, *De mor. eccl. cathol. et de mor. manich.*, II.19.68.

This new system had to recognize the duplication of repentance. Since the new ritual was a duplication of baptism, it had to respect the latter's unique character. Just as there was only one baptism, there would also be a single *paenitentia secunda*. In the early church, indeed, one can detect a clear parallel between neophytes and penitents. Just as the catechumens existed as a separate class, there existed in the first centuries an *ordo paenitentibus*. This system worked for a rather long time. Ambrosius's *De paenitentia* shows that public penance was known in Milan towards the end of the fourth century; Augustine himself knew a semi-public penance.[21] Yet this compromise remained unstable; its application proved too difficult, and it was far from satisfying the needs of the faithful. It did not succeed in imposing itself, and eventually became obsolete. The invention of *paenitentia secunda*, actually, ran against the grain of Christian logic, a fact reflected, for instance, by the *Letter to the Hebrews* (6:4–8) and the *Pastor of Hermas*, for which there is no possibility of forgiveness for sins committed after baptism.[22] Clement of Alexandria, too, only barely agrees to tolerate the *paenitentia secunda*, since he who has received in baptism forgiveness for his sins should not sin anymore.[23]

II. *Tertullian's* De paenitentia *in context*

Tertullian wrote the *De paenitentia* in 203, before his Montanist period. This text is crucial for the history of ecclesiastical penance.[24] Years

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[21] See R. Gryson, ed., transl., *Ambroise de Milan, La pénitence* (SC 179; Paris, 1971); Gryson's introduction provides a broad discussion of the question in the Early Church, focusing upon the Novatians, Ambrosius's opponents. On the public character of the remission of even *peccata minora*, see P. Galtier, "La rémission des péchés moindres dans l'Eglise du troisième au cinquième siècle," *RSR* 13 (1921), 97–129. The ritual, public dimension is still to be found in some Eastern churches; see J. Isaac, *Taksa d-hussaya: le rite du Pardon dans l'Eglise syriaque orientale* (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 233; Rome, 1989).

[22] See I. Goldhahn-Müller, *Die Grenze der Gemeinde: Studien zum Problem der zweiten Busse im Neuen Testament, unter Berücksichtigung der Entwicklung im 2Jh. bis Tertullian* (Göttingen, 1989).

[23] See J. Reiling, *Hermas and Christian Prophecy: A Study of the Eleventh Mandate* (Leiden, 1973). On Clement, see especially *Strom.* II.13; and *Quis dives salvetur* 40 (352–353 LCL).

[24] I am using the text of E. Preuschen, ed., Tertullian, *De paenitentia. De pudicitia* (Freiburg, 1891). One can still read with great profit the fundamental analysis of H. Windisch, *Taufe und Sünde im ältesten Christentum bis auf Origenes* (Tübingen, 1908), 412–433. Oddly enough, Windisch refers to Tertullian's approach as "Jewish" on the problem at hand. See also K. Rahner, "Zur Theologie der Busse bei Tertullian,"

later, Tertullian published the *De pudicitia*, a violent polemic against the penitential discipline of the Catholic Church in Africa, and in particular against the edict of Pope Callistus, who forgave sins of adultery and fornication to penitants. The *De pudicitia* is the first source to mention explicitely the three capital sins, idolatry, fornication and murder.[25] It offers a distinction between *peccata remissibilia* and *irremissibilia*, a distinction absent from the *De paenitentia*. One should underline the fact that the three capital sins (see already Acts 15:20–28 and *I Cor* 10:7) are also found in Rabbinic literature: one should willingly accept death rather than offering sacrifice to the idols, or committing incest or murder. For Tertullian just as for the Rabbis, adultery is a close relative of idolatry, and it is impossible to separate the field of religion from that of ethics (5.4; cf. *De pudicitia*). The great contrast between Tertullian's two works has occasioned many studies. The following analysis will focus upon the *De paenitentia*.

1. Tertullian begins with a psychological analysis of *paenitentia*. The term itself, which is not Christian, denotes an emotion (*passionem animi quandam*) stemming from a radical change of opinion on past actions. In other words, the vocable does not originally possess a moral value, and can also be used, at least theoretically, *in malam partem*, in alluding to a return to evil actions. Without the fear of God, *paenitentia* is vain, since it does not bring one to correct one's conduct.[26] Tertullian proposes to limit the meaning of *paenitentia*, by applying the term only to the rejection of *evil* actions. Doing so, he accomplishes an ethicization of the concept, based upon the idea of God's justice (*iudex deus iustitiae*; 2.12). Side by side with this ethizisation of the concept, Tertullian insists also on its epistemological character: *paenitentia* reflects the passage from ignorance to knowledge. The correlate of this position is the definition of *paenitentia* returning to sin as a revolt, *contumacia*.

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in M. Reding, ed., *Abhandlungen über Theologie und Kirche: Festschrift für Karl Adam* (Düsseldorf, 1952), 139–167. On Tertullian and Montanism, see P. de Labriolle, *La crise montaniste* (Paris, 1913), ch. 3.

[25] *De pudicitia* 5. One should note that Augustine will condemn Tertullian's limitation to these three sins; cf. P.F. Beatrice, "Sin," *Encyclopedia of the Early Church*, II, 781a.

[26] "Sed ubi metus nullus, emendation proinde nulla; ubi emendatio nulla, paenitentia necessario vana." (2.2).

2. The idea of repentance is established also upon anthropology, not only upon theology. As is well known, for Tertullian man is a composite, and the body as well as the soul forms an integral part of human nature.[27] Sins, then, can be corporal as well as spiritual. They are sins of the will (3.3; 4.1). Penance, hence, must purifiy man of these two categories of sins, and repentance must find a double expression, corporal and spiritual.[28] *Paenitentia* should not express itself only in an interior change, i.e., a change of *conscientia* (*ut non sola conscienta praeferatur*), but must be exteriorized, visibly (*in actu*; 9.1). For Tertullian, *conscientia* hides sin, and is therefore, as a rule, guilty. Despite the strong Stoic influences upon Tertullian's anthropology, his approach here is sensibly different from that of Stoic tradition up to Seneca, for which what is exterior always belongs to the *adiaphora*, while good and evil things remain interior.[29] Thus, according to Tertullian, Christianity permits the exteriorization of consciousness.

3. Originally, repentance (*paenitentia*) is identical to baptism, through which one enters into the Church. As such, it is required by God. Now we have seen that for Tertullian, the concept of *paenitentia* entails a vector, a direction. The movement of the soul must therefore be a continuous progress, and a Christian, in theory, should not sin anymore (6.17). In principle, therefore, repentance is not possible after baptism, and the idea of a *paenitentia secunda*, as noted above, is a concession of God's grace to human weakness (5.1).

A sinning Christian has lost the fear of God, and revolts against Him. Doing so, he returns to the service of God's enemy, Satan.[30] In other words, says Tertullian, the Christian sinner "repents from repentance" (5.9). Tertullian then polemicizes against Anomians, for whom faith alone saves, while the expression of sorrow for past sins

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[27] See G.G. Stroumsa, *Savoir et salut* (Paris, 1992), 199-223 ("*Caro salutis cardo*: formation de la personne humaine.")

[28] "Ut corporale sit, quod in facto est, quia factum, ut corpus, et videri et contingi habet; spiritale vero, quod in animo est, quia spiritus neque videtur neque tenetur." (3.8–9).

[29] See H. Cancik-Lindemaier, "Gewissen," *HrwG* 3, 17–31. On the process of interiorization in Early Christianity, see G.G. Stroumsa, "Interiorization and Intolerance in Early Christianity," in A. Assmann, ed., *Die Erfindung des inneren Menschen* (Studien zum Verstehen fremder Religionen; Gütersloh, 1993), 168–182.

[30] "Cum aemulo eius diabolo paenitentia renuntiasset et hoc nomine illum domino subiecisset, rursus eundem regressu suo erigit et exultationem eius seipsum facit . . ." (5.7).

is not needed. In a word, he says, according to them one may commit adultery or parricide and remain pure (5.10)!

In order to refer to *paenitentia secunda*, Tertullian uses the Greek term *exhomologèsis*. This is an act through which one confesses one's sins to God.[31] In opposition to *dissimulatio*, indeed, *confessio*, or exteriorized acknowledgment, lightens sins.[32] As has often been noted, we have here the first mention of *exhomologèsis* in ancient Christian literature. What is for Tertullian of capital importance is the public character of this confession. Three arguments are advanced to justify this character. Firstly, it is an act of (renewed) adhesion to a community. Secondly, human nature entails the exteriorization of behavior. Thirdly, public humiliation is the best warrant of the Christian reversal of values.

4. This reversal of values is explicitely presented as the passage from an ethic of shame to an ethic of guilt.[33] "Some care more about shame than about salvation", says Tertullian.[34] He himself does not care at all about shame.[35] Now one must choose. Is it better to be secretly damned than to be saved, at the price of a public humiliation?[36] since sin hides deep at the bottom of conscience, inward repentance must be accompanied by exteriorization. While it humiliates the sinner in a public way, *exhomologèsis* purifies him inwardly:

> cum igitur provolit hominem, magis relevat,
> cum squalidum facit, magis emundatum reddit,
> cum accusat, excusat,
> cum condemnat, absolvit. (9.6).

The ritual and public character of *paenitentia secunda* is almost theatrical; it reflects indeed the demands of a cathartic process. Like the

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[31] "Huius igitur paenitentiae secundae et unius . . . ut non sola conscientia praeferatur, sed aliquo etiam actu administretur. Is actus, qui magis graeco vocabulo exprimitur et frequentatur, *exhomologèsis* est, qua delictum domino nostrum confitemur . . ." (9.1–2).

[32] "Tantum elevat confessio delictorum, quantum dissimulatio exaggerat. Confessio enim satisfactionis consilium est, dissimulatio contumaciae." (8.9).

[33] 9.6. As is well known, the opposition between shame and guilt, first proposed by the anthropologist Ruth Benedict, has been used by R.E. Dodds in order to describe some major transformations in Greek society, from the archaic to the classical period, in *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley, 1951).

[34] "Pudoris magis memores, quam salutis" (10.1).

[35] "Ego rubori locum non facio" (10.3).

[36] "An melius est damnatur latere quam palam absolvi?" (10.8).

catechumen at baptism, the repentant crosses from the camp of the devil to that of the devil's enemy, God (6.7). Just like baptism, *exhomologèsis* offers protection against Gehenna (12.5). The Church, indeed, is a community, and one cannot be saved alone: "In uno et altero ecclesia est, ecclesia vero Christus" (10.5).

5. In contradistinction to baptism, which had been a second birth, penitence is conceived as an act of mourning. As he laments his sins, the penitent covers himself, in biblical fashion, with a sack of ashes; in order to be forgiven, he fasts. This attitude of the repentant, expressing mourning and sadness (at the remembrance of sins past) is called *penthos*. It will later become typical of the monk in the eastern tradition.[37] These various characteristics of repentance show that *paenitentia* is a new regulating system, already developed at the end of the second century. This system permits the individual's reintegration into society, through acts as well as through a change of heart.

Various scholars, in particular among German Protestants, have characterized Tertullian's insistence on the social dimensions of repentance as reflecting a "Judaizing" tendency in the Church during the second century.[38] One has even spoken of a "fatal return" to Judaism (sic!).[39] This "fatal return," of course, refers to the idea of divine law and to the ethical kernel of religious life, to the integration of body and soul, and of the individual and the community, which are perceived as endangering Luther's idea of savation *sola fide*.

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[37] See I. Hausherr, *Penthos: la doctrine orientale de la componction* (Rome, 1954).

[38] See for instance H. von Campenhausen, *Die lateinischen Kirchenväter*, in the chapter on Tertullian, *in finem*, and Windisch's view, quoted n. 24 above.

[39] See J. Behm, "*Metanoia*," in G. Kittel, ed., *TWNT* 4, 972–1004. One may note that this volume appeared in 1942. I quote: "Der verhängnisvolle Rückfall des nachapostolischen und altkatholischen Christentums in jüdisches Gesetztum kommt in der Wandlung des metanoia-Verständnisses zu bezeischnendem Ausdruck. Der urchristliche religiöse Begriff ist ins Moralistiche zurückgebogen." (1003). About Tertullian, *De paenitentia* 9, he speaks of a "Bussdisziplin analog der synagogalen," and concludes: "An der Schwelle der Geschichte des nt.liche metanoia-Gedankens in der alten Kirche steht alsbald das jüdische Missverständnis." (1004).

PENITENCE IN LATE ANTIQUE MONASTIC LITERATURE

BROURIA BITTON-ASHKELONY

In late antiquity, thousands of individuals withdrew from society to the desert or to urban monasteries in order to seek God by means of a new παιδεία—a discipline which would shape the monastic way of life and ultimately transform its followers by creating a new man (νέος ἄνθρωπος).[1] One of the components of the new παιδεία, as expressed in the Eastern monastic literature in this period is μετάνοια, which may be translated as repentance or penitence.[2] According to Dorotheus of Gaza (died *c.* 560), one of the most attractive of Palestinian monks of the sixth century, all the usual means of achieving μετάνοια—, fasts, prayers, tears, and repentance have a single objective: to transform the monk into a new man.[3]

It is important to stress at the outset that penitence in monastic society did not take place within a sacramental framework as it did in the Church. Rather, it was an integral part of the essential deeds which the monk was obliged to perform in order to shape his way of life. This is clearly reflected in many treatises written in monastic circles in late antiquity, such as the *Letters* of Barsanuphius and John, the *Asceticon* of abba Isaiah and the *Apophthegmata*, a collection

[1] On *Paideia* in Late Antiquity, see P. Brown, "The Saint as Exemplar in Late Antiquity", *Representation* 1 (1983): 3–5; W. Jaeger, *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1962). Jaeger's conclusion that "it was Gregory of Nyssa who transfered the ideas of Greek *paideia* in their Platonic form into the life of the ascetic movement" (p. 100) seems slightly naive.

[2] On μετάνοια as repentance and penitence, see: G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 855–858. Little has been done to date on the study of repentance in Eastern monastic litertature. H. Dörries, "The place of Confession in Ancient Monasticism", *Studia Patristica* V (1962): 284–308. J.-C. Guy, "Aveu thérapeutique et aveu pédagogique dans l'ascèse des pères du désert (IV^{e}–V^{e} s.)", in: *Pratique de la confession: Des pères du désert à Vatican II* (Paris: CERF, 1983), 25–40. General discussion and a few translated texts in B. Ward, *Harlots of the Desert: A Study of Repentance in Early Monastic Sources* (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publication, 1987). On Basil, see W.K. Lowther Clarke, *The Ascetic Works of Saint Basil* (London: S.P.C.K., 1925), 46–52. For the Orthodox Church, see K. Ware, "The Orthodox Experience of Repentance", *Sobornost* 2 (1980): 18–28.

[3] Dorotheus, *Instruction* XV, 160 (SC 92, p. 448).

of sayings and stories of the the fourth and fifth centuries Desert Fathers of lower Egypt and Palestine.[4] In the fourth century, abba John of the Scetis Desert had established μετάνοια as one of the essential elements of the monastic παιδεια.[5] Basil of Caesarea had chosen to open his *Moralia* with an exhortation on μετάνοια: "They who believe in the Lord must first repent (μετανοῆσαι)".[6] To the question "What is the μετάνοια, or what does it mean to escape the sin"?, abba Isaiah responded with a long discourse which describes in fact the entire monastic way of life.[7] For abba Isaiah, the μετάνοια was the appropriate instrument for the transformation of man into a new man.[8] In the seventh century, John Climacus of Sinai made repentance the fifth stage of the spiritual path described in his *Ladder of Divine Ascent.*[9]

The Desert Fathers required monks to examine their deeds frequently. Some prescribed that this be done every morning and evening, others suggested every six hours, while still others preferred every hour. The purpose of this examination, according to Dorotheus, was to purify the consciousness and afterwards to repent of any sins which one might have committed.[10] In this monastic culture, where self-criticism and purification of the personal consciousness marked

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[4] For Barsanuphius's letters I have used the edition of Nicodemus Hagiorites, Βίβλος Ψυχωφελεότατη περιέχουσα ἀποκρίσεις διαφόροις ὑποθέσιν, Venice 1816 (2nd ed. S.N. Schoinas, Volos 1960). For French translation see: *Barsanuphe et Jean de Gaza. Correspondance.* Recueil complet traduit du grec et du géorgien par les moines de Solemes (2nd ed., Solesmes, 1993). For the *Apophthegmata*, on the Greek collection see, J.-C. Guy, *Recherches sur la tradition grecque des Apophthegmata Patrum* (Subsidia Hagiographica, 36: Brussel 1962); A good summary survey of the different collections and their relation to one another will be found in G. Gould, *The Desert Fathers on Monastic Community* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 5–25, and S. Rubenson, *The Letters of St. Antony: Monasticism and the Making of a Saint* (Minneapolis: Fortess Press, 1995), 145–152. Concerning the origins of the text, see D. Chitty, *The Desert a City* (Oxford: 1976), 67–68; L. Regnault, "Les Apophtegmes des Pères en Palestine aux V^{e}–VI^{e} siècle", *Irénikon* (1981): 320–330. Chitty suggested that the text originated outside Scetis, while Regnault argued that the text originated in Palestine.

[5] *Apoph. John* 34. *PG* 65, 216.

[6] Basil of Caesarea, *Moralia PG* 31, 700b. On the nature of the text of *Moralia*, see P. Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea* (Berkeley. Los Angeles. Oxford: University of California Press, 1994), 228–232.

[7] Abba Isaiah, *Logos* 21, p. 121. I refer to the Greek edition of Augoustinos Monachos, Τοῦ ὁσίου πατρὸς ἡμῶν ἀββᾶ Ησαιου λόγοι κθ', Gerusalemme 1911.

[8] *Logos* 25,19, Augoustinos p. 169.

[9] Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent. PG* 88, 623–1164. English translation: C. Luibheid and N. Russell (New York: Paulist Press, 1982).

[10] Dorotheus, *Instruction* XI, 117; XI, 120 (SC 92, pp. 364; 370); *Apoph.* John 264.

its very existence, μετάνοια was a necessity. Indeed, it was seen as the path leading to the gate that offered access to individual salvation, paved with optimism and permanently open, as we shall see below.

The fact that penitence was an integral part of the monk's routine, and not an element of the sacramental system explains some of the differences between penitence in the Church and in monastic society during the period under discussion. This deviation of monastic penitence, which began to take shape during the fourth century, from the tradition of penitence in the Church, concerns us directly.[11] The question of change and continuity in late antiquity, which is one of the most common questions raised in almost every discussion of religious life of that period, is still relevant here: to what extent had the Desert Fathers of the fifth and sixth centuries, and the monastic community in Gaza, who already had two centuries of monastic culture behind them, developed a new pattern of individual salvation or a new method to cure diseases of their clients?

Evagrius Ponticus, a late fourth-century architect of the monastic παιδεία and an important theologian of this movement, regarded penitence as the means by which one mends one's soul and puts it back on the right course.[12] He compared the penitent to a dead person who had come back to life, and to a sick person who had recovered.[13] For Macarius, a prominent monk of the fourth century, penitence was like a carpenter, who straightens that which was bent.[14] How does one straighten what is bent? and how does one mend the soul and become a *new man*?

The body, soul and the Holy Spirit were all involved in the practice of μετάνοια.[15] Prayers, compunction, fasts, vigils, almsgiving, and

[11] The difference in approach on confession in the monastic tradition and in the Church was discussed by H. Dörries, "The Place of Confession", 284–291.

[12] *Ad Monachos* 53, H. Gressmann (ed.), *TU* 39,4 (Leipzig: 1913), 157. See J. Driscoll, "Gentleness in the *Ad Monachos* of Evagrius Ponticus", *Studia Monastica* 32 (1990): 308–309.

[13] Evagrius, *Admontion on Prayer*, translated from the edition of the Syriac version by S. Brock, *The Syriac Fathers on Prayer and the Spiritual Life* (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 1987), 68–69.

[14] *Apoph.* Am. 177,4. I refer to the edition of *Les sentences des pères du désert, troisième recueil*, trans. L. Regnault (Solesmes: 1976), 178–179.

[15] The most comprehensive and impressive perception of the body and its role in the act of penitence in monastic literary sources is the first letter of Antony. New English translation by S. Rubenson, *The Letters of St. Antony*, 197–202. See also Rubenson's analysis of the this letter, pp. 52–53; 78–81; 85; P. Brown, *The Body*

tears were among the more common means of attaining this state.[16] I will focus here on the role played by the spiritual father and the monastic community in the act of penitence.

Confession of sin

Basil of Caesarea asserted in his *Long Rules* that the Superior is obliged to be vigilant on behalf of the souls of the brethren, and must be "as seriously concerned for the salvation of each one as if he himself were to render an account for him".[17] He further emphasized that the Superior's duty is to lead the brethren in everything. In order to exercise this role, Basil stated: "Every sin must be made known to the Superior, either by the sinner himself or by those who have become aware of the sin".[18] As one who encouraged a sense of responsibility for others among his audience, Basil could not ignore one major obstacle to the creation of a holy community, namely the problem posed by the presence of sinners within the community.[19] As far as he was concerned, it was clear that one ought not to keep silence when men sin.[20] Indifference towards sinners was seen by Basil in terms of pollution (μολυσμός) and was sternly condemned. "It is pollution of the flesh when we mingle with those who practise forbidden things; of the spirit, when we show indifference towards

and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988). 223–224. See the interesting role of the Holy Spirit in repentance according to Philoxenus of Mabug in his treatise *On the indwelling of the Holy Spirit*, ed. A. Tanghe, "*Memra* de Philoxène de Mabboug sur l'inhabitation du Saint Esprit", *Le Muséon* 94 1981): 39–71. Eng. trans. in S. Brock, *The Syriac Fathers*, 106–127.

[16] On compunction, see I. Hausherr, *Penthos: The Doctrine of Compunction in the Christian East* (CSS 53; Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1982). On prayers for forgiveness in the *Apophthegmata*, see Gould, *The Desert Fathers*, 105–106; 169; L. Regnault, "La Prière continuelle *monologistos* dans la littérature apophtégmatique", *Irénikon* 47 (1974): 467–93. On the participation of the community in the act of penitence, see the brief remark of P. Andès, "Pénitence", *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* 12, 965. Different means of penitence are discussed by P. De Clerck, "Pénitence second et conversion quotidienne aux III^{e}–IV^{e} siecles", *Studia Patristica* XX (1987): 367–374.

[17] *Long Rules* 25, *PG* 31, 985; *Short Rules* XIX, *PG* 31, 1096b.17. A recent discussion on Basil's ascetical works and the formation of the *Asceticon*, in: Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*, 190–232, 354–359 and further bibliography is given there.

[18] *LR* 46, *PG* 31, 1036a.

[19] *SR* 122, *PG* 31, 1165b.

[20] On mutual correction in Basil, see Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*, pp. 214–216.

those who think or do such things".[21] According to Basil, Christians were called to be each others' guardians, and should grieve over the faults of their brothers and sisters and rejoice at their successes.[22] In such an atmosphere, in which the involvement of the community and the Superior in each other's penitence is not just desirable but rather a bounden duty, the question of public confession takes on a new dimension: should a sinner confess his forbidden deeds to all, or only to some? The only criterion put forward by Basil is that sins ought to confessed in the presence of those who are able to help the sinner.[23]

Although Basil's instructions were familiar to the monks of Palestine and to the Desert Fathers in the fifth and sixth centuries,[24] it is clear that his attitude concerning the sins of others did not flow into the *Apophthegmata* and the monastic treatises written in Gaza. The Desert Fathers even forbade the monks to discuss the sins of other monks. Abba Poemen was asked whether it was right to cover the sins of his brother if he saw them.[25] Basil would have answered this in the negative, but abba Poemen replied: "When we cover the sin of our brother, God covers ours. In the hour in which we reveal that of our brother, God reveals ours". Public discussion of the monks' sins often met reservations and opposition by the Fathers. Abba Isaiah warns the monks not to discuss the sins of others "because it is death for you".[26] Similarly, Dorotheus proposed that the sins of others

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[21] *SR* 53, *PG* 31, 1117b–c.

[22] *Letter* 295, *LCL* Vol. IV, p. 208; *Letter* 22, Vol. I, p. 136. The letters are quotes from *Saint Basil, Letters*, 4 vols., tr. Roy J. Deferrari, The Loeb Classical Library (reprint, London and Cambridge, Mass, 1950–1953). See also, *Moralia* LII: *SR* 162–163; 175; 177–178; 242.

[23] *SR* 229; *PG* 31, 1236a. *SR* 227, *PG* 31, 1233b–c; *SR* 288; *PG* 31, 1284d. The ecclesiastical aspect of these rules and others are stressed by E. Baudry, "A propos du rigorisme de saint Basile: Gravité du péché, libération du pécheur", dans: *Commandements du Seigneur et libération évangélique. Etudes monastiques proposées et discutées à Saint Anselme*, 15–17 Février 1976, ed. J. Gribomont (Studia Anselmiana 70, Rome: Editrice Anselmiana, 1977), 158–173. On confession of a virgin to the Superior and the relationship between the male and the female Superiors in this issue see, S. Elm, *Virgins of God: The Making of Asceticism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 72–74.

[24] For direct relate to Basil ascetic works in the monastic community of Gaza, see for example: *Barsanuphius, Letters* 289; 318–319. Dorotheus, *Instructions*, I, 24; III, 42; XII, 164: Petrus der Iberer, ed. R. Raabe, Leipzig 1895, p. 135.

[25] *Apoph.* Poemen 64.

[26] *Logos* 4, Augoustinos, 15; *Apoph. Colle. System.* IX, 12, eds. and trans. J.-C. Guy & B. Flusin (*SC* 387, Paris: CERF, 1993), pp. 437–439; *Apoph. Pior* 3.

should be ignored, arguing: "You saw the sin, but you are not aware of the repentance."[27] Therefore, according to him, he who seeks salvation should not concern himself with the flaws of others.[28] Dorotheus did not seek to forbid criticism where necessary by means of this instruction, but he did intend to avoid judging others.[29] This was Basil's intention too. However, his approach was based on the well-known conception that sin is not the concern of the sinner alone, for "unless the life of the sinner had been destroyed, his sin would not have rested upon himself alone, but also upon he who did not display a righteous indignation towards him".[30] Indeed, the Desert Fathers shared this view but, as we shall see below, it led them to completely different conclusions and to the adoption of a different pattern of behaviour towards the fallen monk which was more suited to the nature of their monastic community.

How, according to Basil, should the Superior of the monastery fulfill his duty towards the sinner? He was the one who determined the penances the monk would perform for each sin, as well as their duration. Basil's ascetic works, as well as his *Canonical Letters*, testify to his attempt to conceive a method and rules to govern this process.[31] This implies that the Superior functioned as a judge who strove to maintain order within the community, in a manner characterized by sensitivity and tenderness.[32] Basil viewed public confession as particularly important in the case of sins of thought, arguing that public confession encourages the entire community to pray for the sinner to be healed of his illness.[33] None of the architects of the monastic

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[27] *Instruction* VI, 74, p. 278.

[28] *Instruction* VI, 75, p. 278.

[29] On judgement of the other in the *Apoph.*, see Gould, *The Desert Fathers*, 123–132; Dörres "The Place of Confession", 294–295.

[30] *De Iudicio Dei, PG* 31, 668c, En. trans. Clarke, p. 85.

[31] *Letters* 199 and 217. On Basil's *Canonical Letters*, see O.D. Watkins, *A history of Penance* (New York: Longmans, 1920), vol. I, 321–325; B. Gain, *L'Eglise de Cappadoce au IV^e siècle d'après la correspondance de Basile de Césarée* (Rome: Pontificium institutum Orientale, 1985), 200–206. Concernig fallen virgins see, S. Elm, *"Virgins of God"*, 138–143.

[32] *SR* 3; 177. The main instructions for correcting others are mentioned by J. Gribomont, "*Saint Basile; Evangile et église*", in: *Mélange Spiritualité orientale et vie monastique* 36–37 (Bégrolles-en-Mauges: Abbaye de Bellefontaine, 1984), vol. I. 183–185; Clarke, *The Ascetic Works*, 46–52; D. Amand, *L'Ascèse monastique de saint Basile: Essai historique* (Maredsous, 1949), 146–179. Amand's general statement that "La vie du cénobite basilien est une vie très pénitentielle", p. 179, is uncorroborated.

[33] *Sermo Asceticus, PG* 31, 881b.

tradition in late antiquity denied the need for this type of solidarity, so essential in the context of their austere life; however, in contrast to Basil, they did not view public confession as the indispensable means by which it was to be achieved.

The burden-bearer

In the Desert tradition and Gazan school of monasticism, the spiritual father or the holy man functioned as one who assists actively in the act of penitence of the fallen monk. Blessed with charisma and concerned with the state of the monks' souls, the spiritual father does not always wait passively for the sinner to approach him and ask to be given penances. Rather, he sometimes took the initiative in searching out sinners. This was true of Antony, who became aware through revelation of a virgin who had sinned, and made his way to her remote monastery in order to preach ethical behaviour to her entire community. When he approached the monastery, he heard her pleas, her prayers, and her repentance for her deeds, and she was forgiven.[34] There are many instances in the sources of similar initiatives taken by spiritual fathers, who thus broke down the walls of the sinner's silence.[35] This role of the spiritual father was crucial, especially in a society where sins of thought were considered no less grave than the active commission of sins. Thus Dorotheus emphasized the importance of the encounter between the spiritual father and the monk when he quotes his predecessors: "To stay in the cell is half the journey, to go and see the elders is the other half".[36] The elders are those who can help and mediate on behalf of the believer. Barsanuphius looked askance upon a certain monk's attempt to determine the appropriate penance for his own sins, viewing this as an expression of pride. He urged the sinner to turn to the spiritual father to lead him in the way towards God.[37]

The spiritual father was not always successful in this struggle for the soul of his clients. This can be seen in the story of a Father who went to a prostitute on his own initiative so that she would be

[34] *Apoph. An.* 33,4, p. 146.

[35] Dörries, "The Place of Confession", p. 289 were the example of *Apoph.* Makarios 3 is cited.

[36] Dorotheus, *Letter*, I. 180, p. 490.

[37] Barsanuphius, *Letter* 239, p. 148.

brought to penitence. After she repented, she died; it appears that in this case only the punishment of death could complete the act of penitence.[38]

One of the most impressive aspects of the spiritual father's role in the fallen monk's penitence was his assumption of half of the monk's sins, as well as his active participation in his penance. The spiritual father thus became an active partner in the monk's penitence, and the monk in turn became a dependant of the spiritual father.[39] The following story illustrates this type of vicarious relationship. A monk who had sinned went to see Father Lot and said: "I have committed a great fault and I cannot acknowledge it to the Fathers". The old man said to him: "Confess it to me, and I will carry it". The fallen monk had emphasized that his sins were grave, saying: "I have fallen into fornication and I have sacrificed to idols". The old man replied: "Have confidence; repentance is possible. Go, sit in your cave, eat only once in two days, and I will carry half of your fault with you".[40] There are other parallels to this remarkable example.[41] Another account tells of a monk who, upon entering the city, was lured into fornication and desired to get married. The monk's plans were ultimately foiled, so he returned to the desert and went to one of the fathers to tell him his story. The father responded: "Live with me in my cave and fast for three consecutive weeks, and I will intervene with God on your behalf". The father pleaded for the sinner and visited him once a week. The monk, for his part, decided to stay with the father until his death.[42] The direct result of the spiritual father's intercession on behalf of the monk was the attachment of his fate to that of the father. Absolute obedience to the spiritual father, which signified obedience to God's will, was the most obvious manifestation of this attachment.[43]

This behavioural pattern of the Desert Fathers can be definitely

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[38] *Apoph. John* 40, *PG* 65, 217–220.

[39] The dependance of the monk on the spiritual father is discussed in Gould, *The Desert Fathers*, 26–87. On the relationship between the spiritual father and his disciple according to Evagrius Ponticus, see: G. Bunge, *Geistliche Vaterschaft. Christliche Gnosis bei Evagrios Pontikos, mit einer Einführung von Wilhelm Nyssen* (Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 1988), Fran. tra. *Paternité spirituelle*, in: Spiritualité Orientale, 61 (Abbaye de Bellefontaine, 1994).

[40] *Apoph. Lot* 2.

[41] *Apoph*, N. 346; N. 179; N. 180; N. 190; N. 255; N. 335.

[42] *Apoph. Colle. System.* V, 43 (*SC* 387), pp. 285–289.

[43] On obedience in the *Apophthegmata*, L. Regnault, "Les *Apophtegmes* et l'idéal du désert" in: *Commandements du seigneur*, ed. J. Gribomont, 47–79.

traced to the Gazan school of monasticism, headed by the holy recluse Barsanuphius (died in 543), himself an ascetic from Egypt, and by John, about whose origin less is known. These two recluses maintained contact with their monastic community and visitors from afar solely by means of correspondence, a fact which is attested by some 850 surviving letters.[44] A very optimistic view of salvation and a strong sense of solidarity illuminates the letters: there is a remedy for every passion and a penitence for every sin.[45] Barsanuphius wrote to one monk: "I am hereby giving you a commandment for salvation: which if you observe it, I will bear (βαστάζω) the writ that is against you, and I will not abandon you in this world or in the next . . . behold then I have taken from you the weight, the burden, and the debt".[46] Barsanuphius's Letters 168–169 provide the most explicit and vivid examples of this type of relationship. In letter 168 Barsanuphius replied to a monk who had confessed his sins to him, and decided to intercede for him by taking half of the *burden* upon himself in the present life. Barsanuphius emphatically did not regard this manner of intercession as trivial, but rather, as he said, he behaves as one who has lost his head.[47] The monk was astonished by the spirit of solidarity shown by Barsanuphius, who goes on to explain further in Letter 169: "Since you did not understand what I had said earlier: I will bear half of your sins. You should know that I am making you my partner . . . even if you would like to throw everything upon me, through obedience, I will also accept this".[48] In response to another monk who asked Barsanuphius to bear his sins, he agreed to assume this responsibility, though he did so on condition that the monk should in turn act in accordance with his words and commandments.[49] Elsewhere Barsanuphius described the fundamental conditions on which he agreed to bear the sins of the other: a state of humility, obedience, love, faith, and hope.[50]

[44] On Barsanuphius, see Chitty, *The Desert a City*, 132–138; L. Perrone, *La chiesa di Palestina e le controversie cristologiche. Dal concilio di Efeso (431) al secondo concilio di Costantinopoli (553)* (Brescia: 1980), 296–311; L. Perrone, "Είς τον της ησυχιας λιμένα". *Le lettere a Giovanni di Beerssheva nella corrispondenza di Barsanufio e Giovanni di Gaza*, in *Mémorial Dom Jean Gribomont (1920–1986)*, (Roma, 1988), 463–486; S. Tugwell, *Ways of Imperfection* (Darton, Longman and Todd: London, 1984), 83–92.

[45] Barsanuphius, *Letter* 226. Abba Isaiah, *Logos* 16, p. 130.

[46] *Letter* 239, p. 148.

[47] *Letter* 168, p. 112.

[48] *Letter* 169, p. 113.

[49] *Letter* 270; see also *Letter* 553.

[50] *Letter* 231; *Letter* 226.

Without obedience, no help could be obtained from the spiritual father.[51] For Barsanuphius, individual penitence could not be divorced from the instructions given by the spiritual father. However, the search for salvation is essentially an individual matter, linked to man's responsibilities and deeds: "Even living with the holy man and even being buried with him does not ensure that we will be resurrected with him. Physical closeness is different from spiritual closeness".[52] The support of the spiritual father in no way diminished responsibility for one's sins. The Desert Fathers repeatedly stressed that the fallen monk must be conscious of his sin and his struggle, despite their help.[53] Antony emphasized that man should take sole responsibility for his sins. When asked by one of the monks to pray for him, he replied: "I will have no mercy upon you, nor will God have any, if you yourself do not make an effort and if you do not pray to God".[54]

The holy man and the spiritual father were not the only ones who helped the fallen monk. The other monks, especially those living close to the sinner, expressed their solidarity and participated actively in his penitence. Evagrius stipulates in his treatise *Chapters on Prayer*: "It is a part of justice that you should pray not only for your own purification but also for that of every man. Doing this, you will imitate the practice of the angels".[55] In the *Apophthegmata*, the writings from Gaza and later at Mount Sinai, these instructions were fully realized in the setting of the monastic life. Thus, when a monk sinned by defaming another monk, he asked his fellow-monk, "Let us do penitence *together* for two weeks and we will pray to God so that he may forgive me".[56] The support given by monks to their friends in order to help them to remain in the monastery is illustrated in the following story: two monks went to the marketplace to sell their wares. When they departed, one of them committed the sin of fornication, and the other said, "Come, let us return to our

[51] On the role of the spiritual father, see I. Hausherr, *Direction spirituelle en Orient autrefois* (*Orientalia Christiana Analecta*, 144: Rome, 1955). J. Chryssavhis, "Aspects of Spiritual Direction: The Palestinian Tradition", in: *The Sixth Century End or Beginning*, eds. P. Allen and E. Jeffreys (Brisbane: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1996), 126–130.

[52] Barsanuphius, *Letter* 66.

[53] *Apoph.* N. 170.

[54] *Apoph. Antony* 16, *PG* 65, 80.

[55] *On Prayer* 39; *PG* 79, 1176.

[56] *Apoph.* N. 255; N. 346.

cells". However, the sinner did not feel himself worthy of returning. His friend did not want to abandon him, fearing that he would completely abandon the monastic life. He therefore said that he too had sinned, and proposed to do penitence with him. The first monk did penitence for the sinner as if he himself had sinned. The story concludes that this is the meaning of "laying down your life for your friends" (John 15:13).[57]

This model of an intimate relationship between spiritual father and monk, which we have observed in Desert tradition and Gaza, also found expression in the writings of John Climacus at Mount Sinai in the second half of the sixth century. The role of the shepherd was also expressed in terms of the *burden-bearer* par excellence. In his treatise *To the Shepherd*, John Climacus writes: "Let your father be the one who is able and willing to labour with you in bearing the burden of your sin".[58] Climacus expected the spiritual father, the shepherd, to show the same sacrificial love as the Saviour had displayed when dying on the cross for the sins of the world.[59] As in the *Apophthegmata*, he stressed the solidarity which the monastic community, and not just the spiritual father, were to exhibit towards the sinner. They are to assume the responsibility for his sin and his punishment.[60] Climacus emphasizes that "a man will know that he truly loves his brother when he weeps for his sins and is delighted by his progress".[61]

Where did the monks of Gaza and the Desert Fathers find the inspiration for this remarkable model of relationship? Galatians 6:2 offers us one answer, and seems to be the key-text: "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ". Barsanuphius turned frequently to Galatians 6:2, and his repeated appeal is twofold: it was here that he found the theological foundation for the way in which the community should express its solidarity, as well as for the role of the spiritual father.[62] It should be emphasized that for Barsanuphius the role of *burden-bearer* was not a matter of choice but of duty.[63]

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[57] *Apoph.* N. 179.

[58] *Ladder* 3, *PG* 88, 665d. See also K. Ware, in the introduction to the En.tran. *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, 37–43.

[59] *Ad pastorem* 5, *PG* 88, 1177b.

[60] *Ladder* 4, *PG* 88, 685.

[61] *Ladder* 4, *PG* 88, 705a.

[62] Barsanuphius, *Letter* 483; *Letter* 579.

[63] See the case discussed in *Letter* 575, where Barsanuphius quoted Galatian 6:2 in order to persuade a monk to accept the role of the Father. See also *Letter* 553.

Basil also refered to Galatians 6:2 in the same context of μετάνοια. In the *Short Rules* 178, when asked about the meaning of Galatians 6:2, Basil replied: "We take away and remove one another's sins when we lead sinners to conversion (ἐπιστροφή)". It seems that in Basil's view the extent of mutual assistance in the penitential process stops here.[64] The principal help offered to the other is the exhortation to a change of mind and behaviour. There is no hint in Basil's ascetic writings of this pattern of transfer of sin detected in the *Apophthegmata* and Barsanuphius' *Letters*. Although mutual responsibility was important for Basil, it never reached the stage of sharing the sin and its cure as in the *Apophthegmata* and the *Letters* of Barsanuphius. It seems, however, that the role of the *burden bearer* as expressed in Galatians 6:2 could be fully realized only within a small and intimate communal framework.[65]

Duration of penitence

Another feature of penitence as reflected in the *Apophthegmata* and the monastic literature of Gaza is the rejection of long periods of penitence and extreme acts of asceticism. This stands in contrast to Basil's statements in his *Canonical Letters* and ascetic works, although he did agree that the quality of penitence, rather than its duration was of paramount importance.[66] The tradition of the Desert Fathers regarding the duration of penitence appears in the story of a prostitute who repented and ultimately died, when the *Apophthegmata* tells us: "One single hour of repentance has brought her more than the penitence of those who spend much longer in repenting without showing such fervour".[67] A monk who had sinned pleaded with the Great Father Macarius, "Please give me a penance". The old man said, "Go, fast for three weeks, eating only once a week", for it was his usual custom to fast for the whole week.[68] Barsanuphius also

[64] On Basil's general view of mutual responsibility, see D. Amand, *L'Ascèse monastique*, 146–179, and the fresh discussion of P. Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*, 213–216.

[65] For a similar standpoint on vicarious repentance see, Mark the Monk, *On Repentance*, 11, *PG* 65, 981AB. See also *Mary, the Niece of Abraham of Qidum*, En. trans. in: S.P. Brock and S.A. Harvey (eds.), *Holy Women of the Syrian Orient* (Berkeley: 1982), pp. 34–35. Thanks to S. Brock for this reference. I owe this reference to K. Ware.

[66] *Letter* 217.84; *LCL* III, 264. See also J. Gouillard, "Le temps du pénitent a la haut époque Byzantine", dans: *Le temps chrétien de la fin de l'Antiquité au Moyen Age-III^e–XIII^e s.*, ed. J.-M. Leroux (Paris: CNRS, 1984), 469–477.

[67] *Apoph. John* 40, *PG* 65, 220a.

[68] *Apoph. Macarius* 21, *PG* 65, 272b.

admitted that in some cases, especially when the fallen monk was ill, a symbolic act of asceticism, such as a reduction in the amount of food and drink, was sufficient.[69] The following question was put to Father Sisoes by some visitors: "If a brother sins, surely he must do penance for a year?". He replied that this is a hard saying. "For six months?", they asked. According to him, this too was a great deal. "For forty days?" He was asked. "That is a great deal, too". "What, then? If a brother falls, and the *agape* is about to be offered, should he simply come to the *agape*, too?". The old man said to them, "No, he needs to do penance for a few days, but I trust in God that if such a man does penance with his whole heart, God will receive him, even in three days".[70] It seems that when the fallen monk had acknowledged his wrongdoing, others could demand no more of him. Another example has been transmitted by abba Poemen, who was told by a monk: "I have committed a great sin and I want to do penance for three years". The old man said to him, "That is a lot". [the brother said] "For one year?" [The old man said again] "That is a lot". Abba Poemen added, "I myself say that if a man repents with his whole heart and does not intend to commit the sin any more, God will accept him after only three days".[71] This last example, which has several parallels, demonstrates that in those monastic circles in which varing degrees of asceticism were found, other aspects of penitence, especially repentance and the desire to improve behaviour, were emphasized rather than acts of extreme asceticism.

John Climacus stands a part in this regard. He was fascinated by acts of extreme asceticism performed in the process of penitence, as we learn from one of the exceptional descriptions in this literature about a prison for fallen monks, which he visited in Alexandria. For Climacus these monastic prisoners, "citizens of the land of repentance", were a model of penitence.[72]

In this regard too, the Desert Fathers and the monastic community of Gaza deviated from the teachings of Basil, who demanded long periods of penance. He stipulated, for example, that there were to be four years of penance for fornication, during the first year of which the sinner was to be excluded from prayer.[73] In another

[69] Barsanuphius, *Letter* 257.
[70] *Apoph. Sisoes* 20, *PG* 65, 400b.
[71] *Apoph. Poemen* 12, *PG* 65, 325b.
[72] *Ladder* 5, *PG* 88, 780d.
[73] *Letter* 199; *LCL* III, p. 104.

instance he had enjoined someone who had committed fornication seven years deprivation of Communion.[74] In his *Canonical Letters*, Basil prescribed a penance of two years for theft, seven years for fornication, ten years for murder, and fifteen years for adultery. He regarded fallen virgins who had broken their vows as guilty of adultery, incurring fifteen years of penances.[75] In the *Apophthegmata*, in contrast, periods of penance of only one year or even less were widespread for fornication.[76] Excommunication was not rare in Basil's prescribed penances, and particularly when the sinner refused to repent.[77] If penitence was used by the Church to keep order, in the monastic society it was a way of maintaining its very existence. It was for this reason that exclusion of a monk from his community was not desirable, and sometimes even provoked opposition. In one case the spiritual father went so far as to escort the fallen monk out of the monastery's gates on the day of his exclusion. In rare cases of exclusion, the penitent was readmitted to the monastery.[78]

There is no doubt that for Basil repentance was preferable to punishment,[79] but it is still remarkable that the penances he enjoined were severe in comparison to those usual in the desert tradition. This conclusion should not, however, be taken to support the imputation of *rigorisme* to Basil by D. Amand, who claims that Basil did not distinguish between the varying gravity of different types of sins.[80] What is unique in Basil's teachings on penitence is not his alleged *rigorisme*. Nor is it, as has been argued by L. Clarke, the development of two distinct and simultaneous systems of confession which he made no attempt to connect. Clarke claimed that one of these was the official penitential system which Basil had administered as a bishop, while the other was simultaneously inculcated in his *coenobia regula* as a means of grace and as an outward expression of the spirit of com-

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[74] *Letter* 217.59; *LCL*, III, pp. 248–251.

[75] *Letter* 199.18; *LCL*, III, pp. 104–109; *Letter* 217.58; *LCL*, III, p. 248; 217.60, p. 250 where Basil explains that this also applies to those who have committed themselves to the monastic life and have fallen.

[76] *Apoph.* N. 175, pp. 65 67.

[77] See for example *Letter* 288; *LCL*, IV, 180.

[78] *Apoph.* N. 334, pp. 114–115; *Apoph.* V, 286–289, 295–301.

[79] Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*, p. 216 who alluded to Basil's *Letters* 287–288 and *Letter* 188,4,7.

[80] D. Amand, *L'ascèse monastique*, 152–175. Mandita's arguments are convincely refuted by S. Giet, "le rigorisme de saint Basile", *Revue des Sciences Religieuses* 23 (1949): 333–342, and E. Baudry, "A propos du rigorisme de saint Basile", 141–174, and J. Gribomont, "Saint Basil", pp. 81–101.

munity life.[81] Underlying Clarke's conclusion is the fundamental assumption that Basil addressed only the ascetic community in his ascetic writings, and that his *Canonical Letters* were intended for the wider Christian community. Acceptance of this assumption that Basil distinguished between two different communities misses the very kernel of his teaching. P. Rousseau, to whom we owe the refutation of this assumption, points out that even in the *Rules* and treatises that have full ascetic exhortations, such as letter 22, Basil always keeps the entire Christian community in mind. The principles which Basil exhorted, as well as his asceticism were intended to apply to everyone, rather than just to groups of enthusiasts.[82] So, as Rousseau put it, "the distinction was not between classes of person within the Church but between Christians at differing stages of spiritual development".[83] Thus, the difference in approach and practices concerning penitence between Basil and the monastic tradition as reflected in the *Apophthegmata* and Barsanuphius' letters is not surprising. While the spiritual fathers conducted just one homogeneous orchestra, Basil had to direct a heterogeneous one.

Conclusion

Although it is not the aim of this article to reassess Basil's influence on the Desert Fathers and the monastic leaders of Gaza, we should bear in mind that such an influence cannot be taken for granted.[84] The three features of μετάνοια compared here reveal the divergence between Basil's conception and practice of μετάνοια and that of the

[81] Clarke, *The Ascetic Works*, p. 49.

[82] For the full arguments, see Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*, 190–232. Such a point of view is adopted also by P.J. Fedwick, *The Church and the Charisma of Leadership in Basil of Caesarea* (Studies and Texts 45. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1979), 15; 161–165.

[83] Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*, p. 200.

[84] Basil's influence on Eastern monasticism did not gain the same scholarly attention as his influence in the West. For a general statement on Basil's influence in shaping the monastic movement in Palestine especially the coenobitic one, see J. Binns, *Ascetics and Ambassadors of Christ: the Monasteries of Palestine 314–631* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 45; J. Patrich, *Sabas, Leader of Palestinian Monasticism* (Dumbarton Oaks: Washington, 1995), 31; 178; 227 and elsewhere. For Basil's influence on the *Regula Benedicti* see: J.T. Lienhard, *Studia Monastica* XXII (1980): 231–242; P.J. Fedwick, "The Translation of the Work of Basil before 1400", in: *Basil of Caesarea: Christian, Humanist, Ascetic, A Sixteen-hundredth Anniversary Symposium*, 2 vols. ed. P.J. Fedwick (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1981), vol. II, 455–472.

monastic circles under discussion. In contrast to the tendency to formalize penitence in the Church, visible in Basil's *Canonical Letters* and his ascetic works, the *Apophthegmata* and the writings from Gaza community dealing with penitence do not reveal any signs of institutionalization. One could indeed say that μετάνοια as part of the monastic way of life was flexible and was essentially left to the discretion of the spiritual father. The monastic culture, which was dominated by demons and temptations, developed an optimistic view of individual salvation. "Repentance is the daughter of hope and the denial of despair",[85] said John Climacus. In the monastery, to use his words, "heaven on earth", the spiritual father who was the *imitatio Christi*, and the brothers as angels, all had one goal: to help those who had taken the wrong path when searching for God. The concept of *burden-bearer* was one of the most remarkable innovative devices developed for the achievement of this aim.

[85] *Ladder* 5, *PG* 88, 764b.

LES TRANSFORMATIONS DE LA CONSCIENCE DE SOI ENTRE PLOTIN ET AUGUSTIN

ANNICK CHARLES-SAGET

Qu'il y ait eu, entre Plotin et Augustin, une mutation de la notion de personne humaine, c'est ce qui semble clair à tout lecteur qui va des *Ennéades* (éditées par Porphyre aux environs de 300) aux *Confessions* d'Augustin, que l'on date de la fin du IV^{ème} siècle. Dans son livre *Savoir et Salut*,[1] Guy Stroumsa notait que "des expressions comme 'soi réflexif', 'personne' et 'sujet singulier' peuvent toutes servir à décrire la nouvelle sensibilité de l'individu apparue dans l'Antiquité tardive" (p. 200). Il convient pourtant de traiter cette évidence avec prudence pour ne pas en faire une affirmation anachronique. En effet, il n'y a pas de substantif grec ou latin qui puisse correspondre à cette nouvelle conscience de soi. Les Grecs disent "l'âme" et nous sommes renvoyés à l'*Alcibiade* de Platon. A la question: "qu'est-ce-que l'homme?" (129e), Socrate répondait: "l'homme, c'est son âme" (130c). Mais "l'âme" ne dit pas cette relation à soi dont la transformation m'apparaît essentielle entre Plotin et Augustin.

Il faut donc s'appuyer sur d'autres termes et je voudrais montrer comment le mot de "conversion" (chez Plotin, *epistrophè*, chez Augustin, *conversio*) peut, en sa différence de sens chez l'un et l'autre penseurs, éclairer le nouveau rapport à soi qui advient avec Augustin. Plus précisément, parler de con-science de soi, c'est étudier, dans l'élément de la connaissance, les formes de la relation *à soi*. Etudier les usages, implications, transformations, du réfléchi *heauto*. A l'écart de toute logique aristotélicienne (où la relation est la plus pauvre des catégories), de toute logique liée au *Sophiste* (où les liens sont seconds par rapport aux éléments liés).

Ce que nous voulons analyser pourrait s'énoncer ainsi: tenter de voir l'impact réciproque entre le mouvement indiqué par le pronom réfléchi et le mouvement de retour. Il s'agirait d'étudier la possibilité de la courbure du mouvement, de l'*epistrophè*, courbure de l'attention et de la parole, grâce à une possibilité *réflexive* donnée seulement

[1] Cerf, Paris, 1992.

par le langage. Loin de toute optique, loin d'une linéarité brisée de rayons lumineux, nous cherchons à voir comment l'attention à soi dessine une courbe propre à l'âme humaine et à la transformation de sa vie.

Il faut que celui qui parle ou écoute puisse entendre et effectuer ce faire-retour à soi, qui n'est parfois, d'abord, qu'une invitation, une incitation à mettre à l'écart tout le reste. Car le soi n'est pas un contenu, il ne peut être qu'une visée. Personne ne sait préalablement qui est celui qui fait le mouvement ni quel est celui vers qui se fait le "retour".

Si la formule la plus célèbre se dit sous forme d'impératif, *gnôthi seauton*, c'est qu'il y a bien là une *tâche* et que le soi, en quelque position grammaticale qu'il soit, n'est pas connu. Socrate comprend la tâche puisqu'il connaît l'usage du mot "savoir" et du réfléchi. Mais, pour le "se savoir", il lui reste à interpréter ce qui, en dépit de la clarté du langage ordinaire, reste une énigme.

Nous sommes donc dans cette lignée platonicienne et nous avons déjà noté que le mot: *epistrophè (conversio)*, ne peut être étranger à notre recherche. Toutefois, on sait que ce mot est porteur de confusion. Laissons les références à l'allégorie de la Caverne, qui ne contient ni *epistrophè* ni retour *à soi*, et appuyons-nous sur Plotin, où l'*epistrophè* est devenue un terme quasi technique.[2] Mais c'est ici que notre problème se pose car ce retour dans Plotin n'assure pas de prééminence à une relation réflexive à soi et n'est en rien un événement dans une vie. Pour Augustin, en revanche, la conversion s'accomplit dans l'intensité de multiples relations à soi, la honte, le regret, la pénitence, le repentir, la joie, qui font l'infini des variations affectives des *Confessions*.

Comment penser, sur ce point, le passage de Plotin à Augustin quand il semble n'y avoir qu'opposition entre eux? Ou bien y a-t-il entre ces modes de relation (à soi) une complémentarité analogue à celle que proposait Augustin entre les écrits platoniciens et l'Ecriture? (*Confessions*, VII, IX, 13–14) Mais comment "compléter" ce qui nous apparaît chez Plotin comme une absence? Il y a pourtant réflexivité chez Plotin, bonne et mauvaise. Nous en parlerons d'abord, mais

[2] Paul Aubin, *Le problème de la "conversion", étude sur un terme commun à l'hellénisme et au christianisme des trois premiers siècles* (Paris, Beauchesne, 1963), 186–187.

comme il sied en néoplatonisme, le rapport à soi se dira d'abord en termes d'illusion.

1. *Plotin, du refus du narcissisme à la vie intelligible*

Pour l'âme humaine, il existe plusieurs sortes de vies, plus ou moins mêlées de mort. Mais la vie qui laisse place à la fascination pour l'image est, comme la fleur de narcisse, vouée à la mort. "Si l'on courait vers (ces traces, ces ombres) pour les saisir comme si elles étaient réelles, on serait comme l'homme qui voulut saisir une belle image portée sur les eaux . . . ayant plongé dans le profond courant, il disparut" (I, 6 <1> 8, 8–12). Plotin dit: *une* belle image seulement et non pas *sa* belle image. L'image (de soi) n'a besoin que d'être image pour emporter vers la mort.

Pourtant Plotin semble avoir exprimé une méfiance particulière pour sa propre image, si l'on en croit le récit de sa vie selon Porphyre. Les disciples de Plotin auraient décelé en lui une attitude de refus, interprétée comme honte à l'égard du corps. Porphyre, dans le célèbre début de la *Vie de Plotin*, écrit: "Plotin avait honte d'avoir un corps".

Au lieu de voir ici la faiblesse d'une dénégation, je pense qu'on peut lire aussi, et plus encore, la force d'un défi. Défi à l'égard de la visibilité, défi qui s'adresse à soi-même. Mais est-ce seulement à l'égard de soi? Le refus de l'identification à l'image signifie aussi le refus de laisser l'autre s'appuyer sur cette image. Plotin a refusé aussi que l'on fît son portrait. Il ne voulait pas "se donner" en image: "N'est-ce pas assez de porter cette image dont la nature nous a revêtus? Faut-il encore permettre qu'il reste de cette image une autre image plus durable, comme si elle valait qu'on la regarde?" (*V.P.* 1). Si l'on rappelle la manière amicale dont Socrate reprochait à ses amis de pleurer déjà sur son cadavre, on peut comprendre l'attitude de Plotin comme un refus d'aider à cette facilité par laquelle chacun s'écarte de ce qui est, pour se reposer près d'une image.

Aussi Plotin a-t-il refusé tout appui pour qui aurait voulu composer une biographie (*V.P.* 3): pas de lieu de naissance, pas d'ancêtres, pas d'écrits sur le maître, Ammonius, à la limite, pas de corps. Mais pour éviter les doutes de Porphyre et reconnaître la santé de l'ascétisme plotinien, il faut rappeler à chaque fois l'hymne au monde, à la beauté du monde, que constitue le traité *De la nature, de la contemplation et de*

l'Un (III, 8 <30>) et réattribuer à Plotin ce sens de la santé-harmonie qui fait que le sensible est beau. Il reste que, comme Pascal, Plotin aurait pu dire: "le moi est haïssable".

Aussi, le retour à l'intérieur de soi, *eis eisô*, prend-il son sens non par rapport au sensible comme tel mais par rapport à cet *amour* du sensible qui choisit la beauté de l'image pour y arrêter non son regard mais son désir et se fixer alors dans cette ignorance dont l'emblème est Narcisse. Narcisse, dans un mimétisme mortifère de ce que sera pour l'âme l'union avec le Principe, croit se nourrir d'une image qui se reflète en l'eau comme en un miroir. Rappelons la différence symbolique dont est chargée chez Plotin la différence entre la source et l'eau dormante. La source est métaphore de vie qui s'épanche sans s'épuiser, l'eau-miroir est, comme la matière elle-même (II, 4 <12> 11, 37), ce qui donne une présence apparente à un être absent. Le danger de la fascination est là, dans une manière de demeurer auprès d'elle, qui la transforme en sortilège. Il ne s'agit pas pour Plotin de nier, de refuser le sensible ou sa beauté: Plotin voit—et les images de ses traités témoignent de la précision avec laquelle il voit, Plotin voit les autres, les images du monde, mais sans s'appuyer sur eux,[3] si ce n'est pour faire passer l'âme ailleurs: nul n'a su mieux que lui lire dans le sensible sa puissance de transfert, son pouvoir de *métaphore*.

A cet égard, Augustin n'est, même dans les *Confessions*, pas si loin de Plotin, car c'est aussi de la *juste* direction de l'amour dont il se soucie. L'errance qu'il décrit, il la rejette, il la dénie, il veut la brûler au feu de son amour pour Dieu. Et l'on pourrait rappeler que, pour Plotin, toute vertu est d'abord purification, *katharsis* (I, 2 <19> 4).

Si ce n'était que la purification est une métaphore trop usée pour valoir conceptuellement. Pour déceler son sens, en Plotin comme en Augustin, il faut prendre plusieurs métaphores associées, éclairer ce qui les unifie ou les sépare. Alors se dessine plus précisément la distance entre Plotin et Augustin.

J'ai analysé ailleurs[4] comment la purification plotinienne est *aphairesis*. L'*aphairesis* est l'acte et l'art de laisser tomber de soi tout l'ines-

[3] Cf. A. Charles-Saget, "The Limits of the self in Plotinus," *Antichthôn, Journal of the Australian society for classical studies*, 19 (1985), 96–101.

[4] "Aphairesis et Gelassenheit, Heidegger et Plotin", in: *Herméneutique et ontologie, hommage à Pierre Aubenque* (Paris, PUF, 1990) 323–344.

sentiel, comme le sculpteur dégage la statue et fait tomber les scories (I, 6<1> 9).

Enlever, ôter, détacher, cela s'appelle *simplifier* chez Plotin. Simplifier signifie rendre plus apte à la lumière, à la recevoir comme à la renvoyer. Image de l'or séparé de la boue, par exemple, comme s'il s'agissait là d'une opération naturelle dans laquelle il n'y a pas de piège: l'âme devient lumière. Nous reviendrons sur la facilité du passage, depuis le travail sur soi, jusqu'à l'assimilation de l'âme à l'oeil de l'âme: "*Enlève le superflu, redresse ce qui est oblique . . . jusqu'à ce que l'éclat divin de la vertu se manifeste en toi*" (9, 11–14). A cette simplification, Augustin ne parviendra jamais.

Plotin, grâce à la *katharsis*, découvre une autre vie, où se lisent à nouveau les traces de l'Un. Car la simplification n'est pas seulement morale, exigence éthique, elle est un schème qui se répète, qui a son fondement dans les choses mêmes, dans leur dépendance à l'égard du Principe. La *simplification* est retour, retour qui se réitère sans cesse. C'est là l'*epistrophè*. Ce n'est pas un événement. La question, dès lors, peut se dire en termes d'espace: y a-t-il un "espace" où l'âme peut *encore* vivre, sans se simplifier jusqu'à s'effacer?

On trouve chez Plotin le dit d'une expérience de vie et de son espace, qui n'est ni l'espace politique ou humain ni l'espace du monde dont l'âme nous est pourtant parente. C'est celui de l'intelligible: la meilleure vie et le désir vrai de l'homme sont là où ce qu'il y a de plus exigeant en lui trouve à se nourrir. Or le plus exigeant est l'intellect. Par conséquent, la vie et le désir de vie ne se trouvent en leur lieu que dans l'intelligible (IV, 8 <6> 1) ou bien dans la philosophie vécue comme espace discursif dans lequel la parole joue de la tension qui relie le discursif (opinions, questions, argumentations) et l'intelligible, ou bien l'intelligible un-multiple et l'intelligible trace de l'un. Le moi, dans sa singularité sensible, est laissé à l'écart, entretenu puis abandonné comme la lyre (I, 4 <46> 16, 23), non objet de soin, d'*epimeleia*. Pas de souci de soi, au sens où M. Foucault a parlé du souci de soi, du travail sur soi, chez les Stoïciens.[5]

L'âme, plutôt que le moi, et l'intelligence plutôt que l'âme, sont en l'homme cette capacité de reprendre un mouvement de vie qui vient d'avant et retourne par delà. Mais ce mouvement, s'avançant

[5] M. Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité*, 3, *Le souci de soi* (Paris, NRF, 1984).

jusqu'à la Nature et dans les corps qu'elle forme, va plus bas que l'âme. Si bien que le propre de l'âme humaine connaissante, lorsqu'elle saisit sa place à l'intérieur de l'expansion de la vie du tout, lorsqu'elle comprend qu'elle n'est que participation singulière et partielle, consiste d'abord, non pas à *se* savoir, mais à s'éprouver comme illimitée: "Mais nous, qui sommes-nous?" (VI, 4 <22> 14, 16). Il est naturel à l'âme d'aller plus loin que nécessaire dans son souci du corps, dans son souci des autres, et de vouloir aller plus loin que l'intelligible auquel elle participe naturellement. Elle est capable d'*ekstasis*, ou du moins, s'il est vrai qu'elle ne peut *résider* à l'extérieur d'elle-même, elle risque de s'effacer dans le mouvement vers l'extériorité tout autant que vers l'intériorité. Tout autant? D'une manière différente, à coup sûr.

Mais cette illimitation donne un sens originaire à la *tolma*, à l'audace, quand il s'agit de l'âme humaine, puisque c'est *par audace* que l'âme descend dans un corps particulier. Mais l'imprécision naturelle de son lieu fait que l'âme est incapable d'une parfaite conscience de soi ou, plus exactement, d'une connaissance de soi (V, 3 <49> 6).

Plotin nous dit alors là où il y a connaissance de soi: la connaissance de soi n'est présente qu'en ce qui n'a pas d'opacité, pas d'extérieur, en ce qui renvoie à lui-même, vers lui-même, en tout mouvement de pensée, c'est-à-dire seulement dans l'intelligible. Aussi ne devons-nous pas être dupes des mots: même si nous devons user de pronoms "réfléchis" pour dire notre vie, il ne s'agit pas là, à strictement parler, de "réflexion", si ce n'est pas dans la mesure où il se trouve que quelques rayons de lumière sont renvoyés pour revenir vers celui qui l'émet (6, 22–28). Tandis que le mouvement de l'intellect est *naturellement* courbure vers soi et son déploiement (sa *proodos*) est compatible avec une manière d'être toujours à soi tout en se déployant soi-même.

A son tour, l'*epistrophè* de l'intelligible est un double mouvement ou un mouvement *à double référence*: retour vers le principe et constitution de soi. L'image la moins inexacte serait celle du cercle en mouvement autour de son centre: c'est en se référant à son centre que le cercle se constitue. Si c'est là le modèle du savoir de soi, on voit comment il est inapplicable à toute vie singulière, même philosophique. Et Plotin lui-même ne peut que reconnaître ses écarts—ce qu'il appelle *tolma*—que le philosophe corrige de son mieux. Il n'y a que *katharsis*, ou corrections, car il n'y a pas, pour l'âme humaine, de connaissance de soi. Ajoutons que cette connaissance de

soi ne peut être l'objet d'un vrai désir ou, plus précisément, pour le philosophe, elle ne peut être l'objet d'un désir. C'est ici que le moi plotinien, tout en étant de l'être, est au plus mal traduit par le mot substance. *Reprendre* le mouvement qui le traverse, et *pouvoir* le reprendre suppose deux conditions, dont la première seule est directement explicitée: reconnaître la vraie vie certes, et d'abord, mais aussi pouvoir effacer, laisser tomber l'attachement du moi à lui-même. Le détachement se fait, semble-t-il, par le seul effet de son désir. A la limite, il n'y a rien à en dire.

2. *Augustin et le souci de soi*

Au regard de cette discrétion, le souci de soi chez Augustin apparaît indécent, inconvenant. La gratitude à l'égard de Dieu se dit aussi sans limite aucune, nécessairement sans mesure. Qu'a donc lu Augustin dans les livres platoniciens? En quoi a-t-il reconnu la vérité? Pouvait-il se reconnaître lui-même? Les *Confessions* sont l'extrême de l'impensable dans l'espace plotinien. La conversion du livre VIII aussi. "Je jetais des cris pitoyables: . . . "Pourquoi pas, sur l'heure, en finir avec mes turpitudes?" je disais cela, et je pleurais dans la profonde amertume de mon coeur brisé" (VIII, 12, 28)

Corrigeons d'abord une interprétation trop critique, d'inspiration trop plotinienne. A la première question: pourquoi les *Confessions*?, il faut rappeler le double sens de confesser: rendre gloire en avouant. De plus, si la confession est celle d'une âme individuelle, elle ne signifie pas l'amour du singulier sensible: plus exactement, elle prend sens parce que la vie est une histoire singulière dans le rapport que le libre-arbitre joue avec la grâce.

Pour autant, ce "récit de soi" est-il "connaissance de soi"? Non, si l'on en croit les *Soliloques*. Au début de cet ouvrage, Augustin retrouve un thème proprement socratique: la vie de l'âme se manifeste par la question sur soi. Ainsi commencent, en leur première phrase, les *Soliloques: "per multos dies sedulo quaerenti memetipsum ac bonum meum"* ("quand je me cherchais ardemment moi-même et que je cherchais mon bien"). Mais cette recherche qui s'approfondit, ne se retourne pas toutefois en un savoir: elle est plutôt un aveu d'impuissance, et la voie d'Augustin se sépare de celle de Socrate. Lorsque la Raison lui demande ce que c'est que de comprendre Dieu et l'âme, lorsqu'elle s'enquiert de ce qu'il connaît de lui-même et de son ami, immédiatement

Augustin répond: "je ne me connais pas moi-même" (*Soliloques*, I, 3, 8). Interrogé sur son ami qui est "son âme même", il ose dire que, par l'intelligence, il ne le connaît pas: "est-ce lui faire injure que de dire qu'il me demeure inconnu, surtout que, j'en suis sûr, il ne se connaît pas lui-même". L'impuissance à connaître a pourtant le goût de l'échec: il y a trop de distance entre aimer Alypius et ne pas savoir ce qu'il est.

C'est donc un premier timbre des *Soliloques*, à la fois socratique et non socratique puisque cette recherche de soi se retourne pas en un savoir du non-savoir. Mais elle se prolonge en découvrant l'existence qui la supporte. C'est là une des premières expressions du *cogito*, que nous trouvons au début du livre second (en II, I, 1), lorsque la recherche reprend et que la Raison lui demande:

> – Toi qui veux te connaître, sais-tu que tu existes? (*scis esse te?*)

Augustin répond simplement: "Je le sais". Le dialogue reprend:

> – Comment le sais-tu?
> – Je l'ignore.
> – Sais-tu si tu es un être simple ou un être composé?
> – Je l'ignore.
> – Sais-tu si tu te meus?
> – Je l'ignore.
> – Sais-tu si tu penses?
> – Je le sais.
> – Il est donc vrai que tu penses?
> – Cela est vrai.

On a reconnu là une esquisse du *cogito* cartésien: Augustin sait à la fois qu'il est, il sait aussi qu'il pense et qu'il est vrai qu'il pense. Mais le sol de l'évidence se fissure immédiatement: cette évidence ne devient pas modèle de vérité et ce "je pense" ne peut s'assurer d'autres pensées. La Raison "glisse" à une autre question: "Sais-tu si tu es immortel?", et l'échec réapparaît: "Je l'ignore". Or, de toutes les choses qu'il a déclaré ignorer, c'est celle qu'en premier, il désire savoir. Mais le désir de savoir est de nouveau séparé de tout savoir effectif. Si nous évoquons Platon ou Plotin, la différence se précise: par le savoir du non-savoir, Socrate était introduit à l'ordre de l'intelligible, à ce qui se donne comme vie intelligible; Augustin ne dépasse pas l'évidence de son existence. Le reste n'est que probable. C'est là une limitation qui n'est pas sans lien avec l'identification des *logoi* au Logos, au Verbe: la distance de l'homme à

Dieu ne rend plus "naturel" ce passage au divin qu'est la participation platonicienne.

Mais revenons à un autre obstacle dans la quête du vrai, obstacle qui révèle une autre modalité de la distance entre les *Soliloques* et le platonisme. En I, 16, la Raison pose une question qu'elle juge inaugurale, celle de la pureté de l'âme: "c'est la condition préalable (*quod praecedit omnia*)", est-ce que nous sommes sains (*utrum sani simus*)? Cette question relève d'une tradition qui a toujours été platonicienne: la vertu est nécessaire pour que l'âme soit libre de tout rapport aux affects, aux passions, et qu'elle puisse penser. La question pourrait être tout à fait banale mais la manière dont elle entre dans le projet du savoir est si fortement marquée par une méfiance de la Raison et une inquiétude d'Augustin que cette question, loin d'être inaugurale, c'est-à-dire de permettre de passer au-delà, devient un lieu mouvant où Augustin perdra pied.

"Ne perdons pas de temps" dit la Raison, "il faut nous mettre en route. Examinons pourtant si nous sommes en bonne santé morale" (I, IX, 16). Augustin, regardant en lui-même, essaiera de répondre dans la mesure où il "sent" en lui-même quelque chose—*si quid sentio, respondebo.*

Mais cette question, "est-ce que tu es sain?", est transposée par la voix "raisonneuse" qui dialogue avec Augustin en une question sur l'amour, le désir, les impressions imprévisibles, question qui devient alors un lieu d'échec et de tourment: "comment puis-je savoir jamais que je suis sain?". Loin de purifier, loin de dégager un espace où la connaissance vit, cette question fait au contraire ressurgir ce qui devrait être oublié, et le serait effectivement si elle était une vraie question et non une sorte d'enquête psychologique. Elle exerce une force active sur ce qui n'était pas là et qui devient caché, honteux. Elle fait naître la tristesse du second jour (I, XIV, 25). Car la Raison rappelle que la conscience d'être presque guéri peut être mise en doute: pendant la nuit, la distance à l'égard des plaisirs ne s'est pas maintenue: "quand nous avons repris la même conversation, tu as senti que rien qu'à imaginer ces plaisirs et leur amère douceur, une impression voluptueuse te chatouillait bien plus vivement que tu ne l'avais supposé". Voici qui ne peut être ni demandé ni répondu dans l'espace de Plotin. Car là où il y a recherche de connaissance, il y a déjà pour Plotin cet équilibre de l'âme, cette liberté de l'intelligence qui crée et suppose à la fois toute vertu.

Il est temps de reconnaître cette expérience, déjà fondamentale

dans les *Soliloques*, de l'*inquies* augustinien. C'est bien la reprise, sous une autre forme, de ce qui était dit en I, 25: "l'âme se dupe souvent". Il y a une facilité à s'éprouver soi-même ou bien comme pécheur, ou bien comme se trompant. "*Saepe fallitur animus* . . .". Pour quelle raison la raison nous échappe-t-elle? Ce n'est pas une question d'illimitation mais plutôt de complication, de la pluralité des volontés. C'est l'impossibilité de la simplification: Augustin nous dit la résistance du désir et surtout de la *mémoire* du désir ou du plaisir. L'*aphairesis* est impossible. Elle reste le signe de l'insupportable légèreté de Plotin.

Plotin laissait tomber, comme le sculpteur, tout ce qui était scories. Chez Augustin, le regard sur soi est entraîné vers une sorte de recherche réflexive de soi sur soi qui, sans médiation, ne peut jamais que rencontrer l'échec qu'est la duperie. Donc, ne pas savoir, chez lui, n'introduit pas à la sûreté de ce que peut l'âme, mais bien plutôt à une conscience de la faiblesse, qui exige alors de se transformer en appel. Car cette faiblesse ne signifie pas seulement une obscurité, que chacun reconnaît, dans le rapport à soi. Elle n'implique pas seulement une sorte d'indépendance de l'imagination, du désir—ce que Platon, dans le mythe de l'attelage ailé du *Phèdre* disait déjà. Il s'agit plutôt d'une résistance de la mémoire dans le sentiment d'être toujours concerné par le passé qui n'est pas véritablement passé à l'égard du présent. La condition de l'homme *in via* suppose un temps dont l'expérience la plus intense—parce que désarmante—est celle de la faute qu'il ne suffit pas de reconnaître pour qu'elle soit effacée. Tel est l'*inquies*, déséquilibre entre désir et faute, entre l'évidence de mon existence et le non-savoir de mon bien. Qu'il y ait faute ou méconnaissance, l'existence insiste d'autant. "*Si fallor, sum*".

L'*inquies* n'est donc pas en amont de la conversion d'Augustin. Il est ce qui menace, ce qui peut toujours mettre en question une théorie de l'âme et une affirmation de soi. C'est pourquoi cet *inquies* est essentiel à l'âme et non pas simplement psychologique. Il est, bien sûr, lié à la singularité d'Augustin. Mais, comme tel, il marque chez Augustin l'impossibilité de mettre entre parenthèses ce qui détruit l'équilibre, ce qui pourrait "justement" tomber dans l'oubli. Nous avons chez Augustin une force telle du savoir de la faiblesse qu'elle ne peut être détachée du spéculatif et qu'elle ne peut pas être seulement et définitivement reléguée.

3. *La "personne" humaine chez Augustin*

Comment concilier cette vision "inquiète" et la nouvelle richesse que l'on reconnaît à la personne chez Augustin? Citons en exemple, pour parler de richesse, ces quelques lignes qu'écrit Pierre Hadot, au début de son ouvrage *Porphyre et Victorinus*:[6]

> Avec Augustin, un homme nouveau fait son apparition dans l'histoire de la conscience. Cette révolution anthropologique est liée au nouveau concept de personne, créé par la réflexion augustinienne sur le mystère trinitaire. En concevant la Trinité comme la vie intérieure de l'Esprit absolu qui se veut et se pense, Augustin découvre, dans la personne humaine image de la Trinité, l'unité d'un esprit qui reste identique en sa totalité, dans les trois relations de l'être, du vouloir et du penser. (*P.V.* p. 16)

Comment ne pas reconnaître l'importance du mystère de la Trinité et de l'élaboration corrélative des Personnes? Toutefois, et c'est là que la référence trinitaire peut effacer le propre de la vie de l'âme chez Augustin, penser le moi par rapport à ce modèle, c'est insister sur l'unité du moi humain, partir de cette unité pour la corriger. Notre hypothèse, qui veut prendre au sérieux l'*inquies*, le considère comme structural et structurant et ne peut le penser d'emblée comme une *privation* de quiétude (même si le mot *in-quies* semble l'indiquer). L'*inquies* signifie une impossible unité. En cette vie, pourra-t-on dire. Mais de quoi d'autre parlons-nous ici, dans la comparaison avec Plotin?

Un autre considération demande à être examinée. Avec Augustin, dit-on souvent, le rapport religieux prend la forme du dialogue. La prière et les adresses à Dieu intérieures aux *Confessions* se donnent comme preuves. Il faut bien accorder toutefois que l'adresse à un absent ne suffit pas à composer un dialogue. Les *Confessions* se présentent comme un monologue qui se pense et se met en scène en s'adressant à une invisible présence. La foi en cette présence suffit-elle pour que le monologue devienne dialogue? Les deux termes apparaissent impropres. Il reste que la manière dont Augustin interprète les pensées et l'action de Dieu à chaque tournant de sa vie, la reconstruction qu'il propose d'un monologue divin quand il n'entendait pas la voix divine, tout cela ne peut relever que d'une manière

[6] *P. et V.* (Paris, Etudes Augustiniennes, 1968).

de dire le regret ou l'action de grâces, et non d'un dialogue. Et même si l'on identifie les Ecrits sacrés avec la Parole de Dieu, l'interprétation des Ecritures ne devient dialogue que par l'intermédiaire d'une métaphore et d'une foi. Ces réticences, trop rapidement exprimées, signifient simplement qu'il ne me semble pas possible de proposer des métaphores théologiques avant d'avoir tenté de préciser l'originalité de l'expérience humaine décrite par Augustin, la relation entre l'*inquies*, cette interrogation sur le moi et son bien, et l'évidence presque douloureuse de sa propre existence. C'est dans le rapport à soi que peut s'inscrire la nécessité d'un rapport à Dieu, qu'il soit vécu ou non, en termes de dialogue.

L'*inquies* implique que la personne humaine ne peut se penser sur le mode de l'*ousia* qui est toujours richesse. Même si Augustin pense parfois l'âme en termes de substance, je propose que cette considération soit pensée d'abord comme un effet d'interaction culturelle entre la tradition philosophique et l'apport chrétien.

Reprenons le livre VII des *Confessions*. Ce qu'Augustin n'a pas lu dans les écrits platoniciens, c'est essentiellement que Dieu pardonne, qu'il est miséricordieux. Qu'il existe à la fois un don et un pardon. Et si ce don et ce pardon précèdent la philosophie, c'est que la "personne", avant ou au lieu d'être richesse, ne se comprend que dans une espace de dons, dans un échange, dans une "économie". Ici, "l'économie du salut" n'est pas (seulement) théologique; elle est la seule structure dans laquelle l'*inquies*, le temps de la faute et du libre arbitre prennent place, structure dont l'élément humain,s'il en est isolé, ne peut plus comprendre son existence sinon en niant qu'elle ait un sens. La solitude n'est plus un accident. Elle est à la fois distance irrémédiable toujours déjà là, et toujours déjà comblée, sans être effacée. C'est ainsi que naît la conscience de soi.

La différence d'avec Plotin devient claire. Chez Plotin, l'âme se définit par rapport à l'être qu'elle voit comme sa fin et qui est déjà la force qui la constitue. L'âme est elle-même retour, elle n'attend pas de retour, pas de contre-don. La surabondance du Principe ne "se" donne pas, puisqu'il ne donne pas, et qu'il serait incohérent qu'il se donnât. L'âme plotinienne ne demande rien. Il n'y a donc pas d'analogie structurale entre l'espace augustinien de l'échange et le mouvement plotinien vers le Principe ou, si l'on préfère, entre les deux sens de la conversion. Car la limite du mouvement vers l'Un chez Plotin s'exprime par la métaphore du toucher, là où il n'y a plus

d'espace entre l'oeil et la lumière ou, pour parler sur un mode augustinien, plus d'espace de vie entre personnes. En ce sens, ce qui apparaît comme espace infini entre Dieu et la créature, détermine la possibilité de la prière et du don.

Dernière remarque: la "conversion" augustinienne conserve-t-elle dans l'espace du don, le rôle décisif qui est le sien dans la biographie? Certes, si "se tourner vers" n'est pas réduire une distance mais en découvrir le sens. Alors, le moment biographique dit "conversion" ouvre cet espace où peut se dire et s'entendre un appel. Et si la miséricorde est essentielle en cet espace, c'est bien parce qu'elle implique l'assurance qu'il y aura, pour la prière, un retour. La confession et la pénitence suscitent donc un retrait qui donne place pour le contre-don, et la conscience de la faute peut seule redonner mouvement au cycle des échanges, échange qui n'est pas de *pure* surabondance, ni de *pure* générosité, car la pureté n'a pas de sens primordial dans une économie de disproportion où l'existence même peut être pensée comme un don.

Ainsi la conversion crée un espace de tension entre l'homme et Dieu et ne le supprime pas. Tandis que la pensée plotinienne efface la distance qui contraindrait la personne humaine à se donner forme, l'expérience augustinienne de l'*inquies* s'accorde à ce dit de la tradition cabbaliste selon laquelle Dieu, pour créer le monde, créa un vide en se retirant.

PART TWO

GUILT, SIN AND PURIFICATION

DIMENSIONS AND TRANSFORMATIONS OF PURIFICATION IDEAS

Fritz Stolz

1. *Problems*

Purity, in a religious sense, means more than a simple absence of dirt. To perform certain rites in Mesopotamia, it is necessary to wash the hands (šu-luḫ)—but this is not enough. Ritual purity is more than "normal" purity. But what exactly do we mean with "more"? A Sumerian text says it with these words:

> Your hands are washed, your hands are washed.
> Your hands are washed, you are clean; your hands are washed, you are pure.
> Your hands are washed, you are resplendent; your hands are washed, you are shining . . .
> May this man, the son of his god, become clean like the heavens![1]

The special quality of cleanness in this text is produced by joining similar terms: clean, pure, resplendent, shining.[2] Religious cleanness seems to consist in an intensified profane cleanness, a cleanness that takes on cosmological dimensions. In any case, religious purity is more than "normal" purity.

The Old Babylonian version of the epic of Gilgameš contains a section which is very instructive with respect to the cultural and religious value of cleansing.[3] Enkidu, the animal-man, has to be changed

[1] Šurpu IX,88–92; E. Reiner, *Šurpu. A Collection of Sumerian and Akkadian Incantations* (Graz: Archiv für Orientforschung Beiheft 11, 1958), 48.

[2] The Sumerian expressions are kù, sikil, šen, dadag. In this section of the text, there is no Akkadian version; normally, there are only two Akkadian equivalents for the four terms in question: *ellu* and *ebbu*. Obviously, there is no strict semantic delimitation between the different expressions (although, of course, there are nuances). J.E. Wilson, *"Holiness" and "Purity" in Mesopotamia* (Neukirchen-Vluyn/Kevelaer: Neukirchener Verlag/Butzon & Berker, AOAT 237, 1994) might be right that kù is more closely tied to the realm of the divine than sikil—that's why he translates kù as "holy", sikil as "pure". However, the differentiation is floating.

[3] Old Babylonian Version, Pennsylvania-Tablet III,22ff.—Translation: S. Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 138–139.

into a real human being. The process of humanization is enacted by Šamḫat (a personal name with the meaning "harlot", a priestess of Ištar); the cultural transformation is expressed in the dimensions of nutrition (Enkidu learns to drink beer and to eat bread), personal hygiene (Enkidu learns to wash himself[4] and to anoint his body), and sexuality (Enkidu learns to sleep with the harlot during seven days and nights). Nutrition, personal hygiene and sexuality are basic for natural life; in the animal world, there are specific biological regulations. On the human level, behavior in these respects is culturally regulated: Food is consumed in an altered state (by brewing, baking and other techniques), the care of the body varies according to cultural traditions, and sexual techniques become manifold. In addition, all these cultural procedures play an important role in the religious symbol system: The preparation of food is essentially invented for the gods, the gods are "pure" in the highest degree, and the *hieros gamos* is an important cultic element. The material effect of nutrition, cleansing and sexuality is enriched by aspects of cultural and religious signification.[5] As for the case of hygiene, every-day purity and religious purity go hand in hand, the latter completing the former.

However, the relation between religious and every-day purity can be seen in quite another way. The New Testament blesses those whose hearts are pure (Mt 5,8)—even if their hands are dirty, one could add; this is confirmed by a text such as Mk 7,15: "Nothing that goes into a man from outside can defile him; no, it is the things that come out of him that defile a man." There are other texts, not only Christian, that go in this direction.[6] The relation between religious, cultic, and everyday purity seems to be contradictory.

The comparative approach to religious purity has to deal with two problems. On the one hand, religious purity is always linked to pro-

[4] L. 22 is damaged; probably *ultappit ma'-i*, cf. W. von Soden, "Untersuchungen zur Babylonischen Metrik, Teil I," *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 71 (1981), 161–182, especially 181, note 25.

[5] On this process cf. F. Stolz, "Von der Begattung zur Heiligen Hochzeit, vom Beuteteilen zum Abendmahl – kulturelle Gestaltungen natürlicher Prozesse", in: *Homo naturaliter religiosus: Gehört Religion notwendig zum Mensch-Sein?*, ed. F. Stolz (Bern: Peter Lang, 1997), 39–64.

[6] The Buddha's reaction on the ascetic purification rites: "It is not through water that a man is cleansed, may he bathe ever so much; he in whom dwell truth and virtue, he is pure, he is a Brahmana."—Cf. K. Seidenstücker, *Udāna* (Augsburg: Lampart, 1920), 6–7 (Udāna I, 9).

fane purity. But the profane concept of purity is variable—apart from the fact that the demarcation between profane and sacred is variable, too. On the other hand, the relation between religious and profane purity varies enormously—as our initial examples show. Thus it is not possible to conceive a general idea of religious purity in the manner of the phenomenology of religion.[7] Instead, we have to develop a descriptive tool for the classification of relations between everyday and religious concepts of purity. I will try to analyze some concepts of purification in order to describe typical dynamic patterns of establishing purity.[8] I will begin by introducing some methodological questions by means of a well known purification story.

In Isaiah 6, the prophet is situated in the temple; he sees the seraphim and God himself. The text reads as follows:

> Then I cried:
> "Woe is me! I am lost,
> for I am a man of unclean lips
> and I dwell among a people of unclean lips;
> yet with these eyes I have seen the King, the lord of Hosts."
> Then one of the seraphim flew to me carrying in his hand a glowing coal which he had taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. He touched my mouth with it and said:
> See, this has touched your lips;
> your iniquity is removed,
> and your sin is wiped away.

The effect of this purification is Isaiah's qualification to become God's prophet. He enters the inner circle of God's realm. What are the characteristics of purification represented by this text?

A literary critic would classify the text as fictional; seraphs do not perform real flights, and real burning coals would cause burns instead of purification.

However, there were factual purification rituals, and, in addition, there are factual elements in the quoted section of text and in its context as well. The iconographic approach to the text has contributed

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[7] The general connection between "profane" and "religious" purity and purification is mentioned by G. van der Leeuw, *Phänomenologie der Religion* (Tübingen: Mohr, 3rd edition 1956), 386–393; neglected by F. Heiler, *Wesen und Erscheinungsformen der Religion* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2nd edition 1979), 185–204.

[8] The aim of this paper is characteristically different from Mary Douglas' task of looking for relations between conceptions of purity and social classifications. Cf. M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger. An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Ark Paperbacks, 1966/1984).

many insights into the scenario of Isaiah 6, though there are continued discussions of the cultural and cultic background of the seraphim, the relation between heaven and earth in the temple ideology, etc.[9] As to purification, scholars have considered real purification rituals as models for the fictional process the text describes; the search for parallels within and without the Old Testament has been fruitful.[10] The author, then, would have transposed a cultic experience into an imaginary sphere. But what are the principles of this "transposition"? Are they shaped by convention or by singularity? What is the effect of such a transposition from the factual to the fictional field? I think the distinction "factual/fictional" is not sufficient for classification with respect to the problems we are dealing with.

The transposition we find in the text of Isaiah 6 is, above all, a transposition from visual and ritual reality to the level of language. The icons of iconography and the actions of ritual become elements of description and narration; they become metaphors, in a certain sense.[11] Thus we have to analyze the metaphoric use of the visual and ritual elements of the cult.

Yet these elements already possess a metaphorical value in their original cultic setting. That is what we mean when we say that washing hands before performing a rite means "more" than removing some particles of dust. Such ritual gestures have a metaphoric dimension. In many cases this dimension is alluded to in the linguistic part of the ritual; we will deal with examples later. In Isaiah 6, the metaphors nourished by iconography and ritual developed into mere language, into a literary form.

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[9] O. Keel, *Jahwe-Visionen und Siegelkunst* (Stuttgart: Kath. Bibelwerk, Stuttgarter Bibel-Studien, 84/85, 1977), 46–124; B. Janowski, *Sühne als Heilsgeschehen* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, WMANT 55, 1982) 123–129; F. Hartenstein, *Die Unzugänglichkeit Gottes im Heiligtum. Jesaja 6 und der Wohnort JHWHs in der Jerusalemer Kulttradition* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, WMANT 75, 1997), esp. 30–109.

[10] Especially V. Hurowitz, "Isaiah's Impure Lips and Their Purification in the Light of Mouth Purification and Mouth Purity in Akkadian Sources", *Hebrew Union College Annual* 40 (1989), 39–89.

[11] The phenomenon we deal with has been called "spiritualization"; since the book of H.-J. Hermisson, *Sprache und Ritus im altisraelitischen Kult* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, WMANT 19, 1965), there has not been much effort devoted to these problems. One aspect of this process concerns the development from icon into metaphor. In the last two decades, many works on metaphors appeared on the one hand, on iconography on the other—but, as far as I know, no systematic investigations on the relations between iconography and metaphoric language.

This transposition can be considered under different points of view. It has an individual and a social aspect. To some extent, both aspects have been discussed in conventional exegetical approaches to the text. The chapter of Isaiah 6 has often been called a "vision". This is a psychological category; in the 19th century, when the prophet was seen as an exceptional individual and a religious genius, it was common to look for the "inner experience" of such an extraordinary personality.[12] Later on, psychologists and psychiatrists tried to describe the type of ecstasy, be it "normal" or "pathological".[13] The elements of iconography and ritual become elements of individual fantasy and imagination; they are put into a new individual setting. The process of transformation can be specified as internalization and internal rearrangement.

Another approach is methodologically guided by form criticism. Isaiah 6 belongs to the stories of the call of a prophet; the text is to be compared with accounts of Jeremiah, Moses, or Ezekiel.[14] The prophet assumes a mediating role between God and Israel; the promotion of a formerly "normal" man into that special position (in the center or on the margin of the society, according to the point of view) is the theme of the text. The rite of purification is the literary expression of the initiation to that new position. The text reflects the ideas of prophetic existence within the prophetic sub-culture; its aim is the identification of the recipient with the ideas, values and feelings of such a prophetic existence. The elements of architecture and ritual become communicative elements in a literary pattern that serves for collective orientation.

The metaphorical value of iconographic and ritual elements and their transposition into individual and collective language is of methodological relevance for the analysis of cultic texts in general. I will

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[12] Cf. Duhm's imagination of the prophet who "steht . . ., nachdem sich die Teilnehmer am Opfer verlaufen, einsam und in tiefes Sinnen verloren, im Tempelvorhof, das Auge gerichtet nach dem Ort, wo Jahwe im dunklen Hinterraum des Tempels geheimnisvoll zugegen ist. Da wird ihm der innere Sinn geöffnet, da erblickt er Jahwe selber . . ." B. Duhm, *Israels Propheten* (Mohr: Tübingen 1916), 145–146.

[13] Examples: I.P. Seierstad, *Die Offenbarungserlebnisse der Propheten Amos, Jesaja und Jeremia* (Oslo: Skrifter utgitt av det Norsk Videnskaps-Akademi II/2, 1946), 59–66; overview on the problems: F. Maaß, "Zur psychologischen Sonderung der Ekstase", *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Karl-Marx-Universität Leipzig* 3 (1953/54), 297–301.

[14] Example of that type of research, focusing on Jeremiah and Ezekiel: D. Vieweger, *Die Spezifik der Berufungsberichte Jeremias und Ezechiels im Umfeld ähnlicher Einheiten des Alten Testaments* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1986).

apply these points of view to Mesopotamian texts that deal with rites of purification and are often cited as "parallels" to Isaiah 6. The historical relationship, however, between the Biblical and Mesopotamian Texts is not my concern. I am interested in patterns of development in different levels of metaphor.

2. *Mesopotamian material*

2.1 *Purification according to the* Šurpu-*Ritual*

The heading *šurpu* marks one of the large Mesopotamian series of incantations.[15] The popularity of this ritual is obvious; its archaeological documentation reaches from the Old Babylonian to the Late Assyrian Period. There were different versions of the series, the *šurpu*-treatment in Assur and in Nineveh was not completely identical. There is no clear indication of the precise situations that called for the application of this ritual; the diseases and defects of the suffering person are described in a very summary manner, as is normal in such texts.

The practice of *šurpu* comprises a series of ritual acts on the one hand and a large number of recited texts on the other. The first tablet contains the actions of the ritual (*nēpešu*, just like Greek δρωμενα). The texts to be recited are represented by their incipits. Unfortunately this first tablet is not preserved totally, so we know only a part of the whole ritual. Tablet 2ff. contain the texts, principally the texts mentioned in tablet 1. The central acts of the ritual are represented by the texts of tablets 5–6.

The acts of the ritual are simple and transparent. I will give you some impressions of the text in question.

I, 1. When you perform the rituals for the Šurpu(-series), you set up a brazier,
2. you put trimmed reeds crosswise on top of the brazier,
3. and you surround it with a magic circle of flour.
4. You recite the incantation "I am a pure man", sprinkle water (around),
5. light a torch from a sulphur-flame; (the incantation) "Gibil, wise, exalted in the country",

[15] E. Reiner 1958.

6. (and) the incantation "River who renews himself constantly" you recite, then purify the patient; . . .
13. sprinkle water on the patient. An onion, (bunch of) dates, (a piece of) matting,
14. a flock of wool, goats' hair (and) red wool you take into your hands,
15. place it [over?] the patient. . . . . .
18. he will then peel the onion and throw it into the fire,
19. he will strip off the dates and throw them into the fire, . . .
24. [. . .] (the incantation) "Calm down, oh fierce Girru!" . . .

Three actors are engaged in the ritual: The patient, the incantation priest (to whom the ritual text is addressed), and an assistant of the priest *(āšipu)*.[16] The fight against the powers of evil is difficult; the priest needs a special legitimization for his purpose. However, this problem is not treated with respect of the priest's professional competence but on a mythological level. The fifth tablet begins with a conversation between Marduk and Ea, his father (a very common element of therapeutic incantations since the Old Babylonian period):[17] Marduk becomes aware of the attack of the *gallû*-demon, which causes the disease of the sufferer. He goes to his father in order to get advice—but Ea assures Marduk that he is as competent and successful as his father. So the son can act in the authority of his father. The conversation has the function of a legitimization and an interpretation: The young Marduk carries out what Ea intends. So far the level of narrative language, of "mythology". On the level of ritual acting, the role of the "son" is assumed by the priest; he is the authorized actor who represents the highest might of heaven and earth in order to withdraw the evil powers.[18] The ritual drama engages the elementary cosmic forces—an aspect of the ritual we will find elsewhere, too. The treatment is conceived in two different modes, as a fight against hostile powers and as cleansing, according

[16] E. Reiner 1958, 4.—The whole process has to be compared with related types of rituals; there is a very instructive publication on *namburbi*-Rituals: S.M. Maul, *Zukunftsbewältigung: Eine Untersuchung altorientalischen Denkens anhand der babylonisch-assyrischen Löserituale* (Namburbi) (Mainz: Zabern, 1994).

[17] A. Falkenstein, *Die Haupttypen der sumerischen Beschwörung literarisch untersucht* (Leipzig: Leipziger Semitistische Studien NF 1, 1931), 44–55; Maul 1994, 41.

[18] The delegation of power from older to younger gods is a mythical theme with different meanings. On the one hand, it means the replacing of older, "worn-out" deities by younger, more attractive and politically more dominant gods (as it is the case, for instance, in lugal-e or in *enūma eliš*; and on the other hand, it means the switching from the narrative to the acting level, from myth to ritual.

to a double understanding of disease. For our concern, the interpretation of disease as pollution is important.[19]

The most important means of purification are water and fire.[20] Water is sprinkled around and poured over the patient. Most probably, the priest himself has to undergo a purification such as the šuluḫ-ceremony; the incantation with the incipit "I am a pure man" is clear enough. In another ritual tablet, a prayer for the *bārû*-priest is mentioned under the title *ikrib mār bārê ina mê pā u qātē ulluli* "prayer of the divination priest (to accompany) the cleansing of his mouth and his hands."[21] Unfortunately, the text of the prayer itself is broken away except for the first line, the addressing to Šamaš and Hadad. The washing of hands and other parts of the body is important for performing a rite. The search for parallels to Is 6 drew attention to texts where the mouth is of particular importance.[22] Washing the mouth is important not only for men but also for gods; the rite has been compared with the Egyptian ceremony of "opening the mouth".[23] The ritual action of washing the mouth of a priest or a statue is echoed on the mythological level when gods wash themselves in pure water in order to become "clean" or "holy".[24] The process of cleansing by water is enacted on the ritual level and represented by religious language.

The other important or more important element of cleansing in the *šurpu*-ritual is fire (*šurpu* means burning). The priest has to set fire to a torch which the patient seizes with his hand. So the patient is one subject on which the fire acts. The other place is the brazier; the priest sets fire to the reed on the brazier in front of the patient

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[19] On the background of this understanding (especially in Greece, but also elsewhere) cf. W. Burkert, *Creation of the Sacred. Tracks of Biology in Early Religions* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996), 122–127. As for the act of cleaning from pollution and evil in the namburbi-Rituals cf. Maul 1994, 39–41.

[20] Water and fire are the traditional elements of cleansing in many cultures; cf. F. Heiler 1979, 185ff. As for the cleansing water in the namburbi-rituals cf. Maul 1994, 41–46.

[21] H. Zimmern, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis der Babylonischen Religion* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrich'sche Buchhandlung 1901, reprint 1975), 212 (96,3; 97,7f.).

[22] Cf. the material treated by Hurowitz 1989, 48ff.

[23] On the ritual of "opening the mouth" in Egypt cf. E. Otto, *Das ägyptische Mundöffnungsritual* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, Ägyptologische Abhandlungen 3, 1960); Hurowitz 1989, 49.

[24] The so-called Astrolab B, for instance, indicates for a certain date, that "the goddesses are purified in the sacred river, they have their annual cleansing" (KAV 218 A ii 18).

(this is not said explicitly, it goes without saying). In the course of the ritual, the patient is equipped with different elements that are thrown into the fire and burnt. The significance of these acts is quite clear: The diseases and afflictions are manifested in these elements and in this form they are treatable. The accompanying texts makes this clear. For instance, the sufferer has to peel an onion and throw the pieces into the fire; the formula of the incantation reads:

V–VI, 60. Like this onion he peels and throws into the fire,
61. —the fire consumes it entirely—
62. which will not be grown in a plant-bed,
63. which will not be close to a ditchbank or canal,
64. whose roots will not take hold in the soil,
65. whose shoot will not sprout, and will not see the sun,
66. that will not be used for the meal of god or king,
67. (so) invocation, oath, retaliation, questioning,
68. the pain of my hardship, sin, transgression, crime, error,
69. the sickness that is in my body, my flesh, my veins,
70. may be peeled off like this onion,
71. may the fire consume it entirely today,
72. may the oath leave so that I may see the light!

This is a classic performance of homeopathic magic.[25] However, we have to consider the details in order to describe what "magic" means. The evil, on the one hand, is not differentiated. The corporal, moral and intellectual deficit form a unit; sickness and sin, crime and error are not separated. There is no specific diagnosis for the suffering of one or another patient. In the therapy, however, differentiation takes place. Evil is incorporated in different shapes, which can be destroyed and burnt; the incantations give an interpretation of this destruction and burning: There is no way backward or forward, the date will not return to the cluster, its natural origin, nor will it be used for a meal, the cultural destination of a date. Instead, it is annihilated in a strict sense. In a similar way the disease is identified with something that belongs neither to the natural nor to the cultural sphere of life—it is "nothing" and has to disappear. This idea is represented redundantly by different metaphors; one significate is equipped with a series of significants.

Fire is also present in the torch held and controlled by the patient.

[25] Cf. the classic description by J.G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, Abridged Edition (London: Macmillan, 1963), chapter 3; updated in: J.G. Frazer/Th.H. Gaster, *The New Golden Bough* (New York: Mentor-Books 2208, 1959/1964), 35ff.

So we could say: fire is present in a destroying, annihilating form and in a positive, constructive form. This aspect is stressed by the personification of fire in the divine figure of Girra. Two incantations which have to be recited one after the other deal with these two aspects of fire. In the first incantation, the priest presents himself as the master of fire and provides for the limitation of its destructive power:

V–VI, 173. Incantation. I am a purification-priest, I kindled a fire,
174. I kindled the stove, I threw in the magic ingredients,
175. I am the purified, the clean (priest) of Ea, the messenger of Marduk.
176. I am banking the stove I kindled,
177. I am extinguishing the fire I lit . . .

On the other hand, fire is a cosmic potency, and in the ritual act, the cosmic powers are engaged to eliminate the anti-cosmic evil element. The ritual performance represents a cosmic drama. Girra and other cosmic elements are invoked and pacified. The recitation of this incantation corresponds to the careful extinguishing of the fire on the brazier.

V–VI, 187. Incantation. Calm down, oh fierce Girra!
188. Let the mountains and the rivers calm down with you,
189. let the Tigris and the Euphrates calm down with you,
190. let the ocean, the wide sea, calm down with you . . .

So the metaphoric aspect of the performance is quite obvious. The process of magic has a purpose; that has been stressed by the older theorists. But the process of magic has also a meaning; it provides the opaque situation with metaphors that are understandable.[26]

Incantations addressed to Girra show a large field of metaphors associated with the idea of "cleansing", the starting point of our investigation:

6/7. Incantation. Gibil, wise, exalted in the country,
8/9. valiant hero, son of the Apsû, who are exalted in the country,
10/11. Gibil, with your pure, resplendent flame
12/13. you bring light into the House of Darkness.
14. Whatever is called by a name, you brand,

[26] Cf. the contributions collected by H.G. Kippenberg/B. Luchesi, *Magie* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1978, 2nd edition as stw 674, 1987).

15. whatever is called by a name, you decree its fate,
16/17. you are the one who alloys copper and tin,
18/19. you are the one who refines gold and silver,
20. you are the one who brews beer,
21. (you are the companion of Ninkasi,)[27]

Gibil/Girra brings light into the house of darkness; the symbolism of light and darkness occurs often in connection with Girra, but, of course, in connection with other gods, too, especially with the sun-god Šamaš. Light and life are associated; the god of the fire develops into a creative principle. There is a factual basis of this statement: Fire is utilized in the technology of pottery and metallurgy; both techniques are turned into a metaphorical dimension: Branding is associated with "calling by name" and "decreeing the fate", in other words, the original act of creation. In both cases, the development of metaphorical values is very typical: The goal of a process of craftsmanship turns into a related significance. The level of material effects is replaced by a level of communicative effects.[28] In addition, there is a field of activity that, for our understanding, is not related to fire at all: the brewing of beer. The force of fermenting is personified and deified in the goddess Ninkasi;[29] Ninkasi becomes the companion of Girra. Thus Girra is conceptualized as a basic force of creative transformation. This type of elementary speculation of a "principle" of transformation does not occur frequently in Mesopotamia; it is fully developed in India where Agni, the god of fire, became the first of several conceptualizations of a basic dynamic principle.[30] In India, speculation gained an important place in some religious milieus—a development that did not take place in Mesopotamia.

In sum, the *šurpu*-ceremony is an example of real ritual acting. Water and, above all, fire are used as means of purifying. The acts that are performed express a rich semantic, which is specified and enlarged by the accompanying texts. Human roles and ritual elements

[27] Reiner 1958, 53.

[28] Cf. Stolz 1997 and F. Stolz, "Effekt und Kommunikation. Handlung im Verhältnis zu anderen Kodierungsformen von Religion", in: *Religion als Kommunikation*, Ed. H. Tyrell/V. Krech/H. Knoblauch (Würzburg: Ergon, Religion in der Gesellschaft 4, 1998).

[29] A Sumerian hymn dedicated to Ninkasi describes the process of brewing; cf. M. Civil, "A Hymn to the Beer Goddess and a Drinking Song", in: *Studies Presented to A. Leo Oppenheim* (Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago), 67ff.

[30] J. Gonda Gonda, *Religionen Indiens. I. Veda und älterer Hinduismus* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2nd edition 1978), 67–73.

are reflected in the divine world. The purifying ritual integrates the extreme situation of suffering into the play of the well-known cosmic powers. Opaque reality is covered with an abundance of meanings—this is what Lévi-Strauss described as the central point of magic and psychotherapy.[31]

2.2 *Prayers for cleansing*

Normally, Mesopotamian prayers are accompanied by rituals, as far as we know; many of the šu-ila-prayers, for instance, end with a short reference to the ritual act prescribed.[32] In most cases, this ritual is very simple; it contains incense, sometimes a libation, and, in certain cases, the performer can choose between different rituals.[33] The semantic aspect of such a ritual is very poor; there is no parallel between prayer and ritual, between language and acting. The prayer has to end with a ritual act, otherwise it would not be a real prayer; we could compare this situation with Christians, whose prayer must end with an "Amen"—otherwise it would not be a prayer. So the function of ritual is restricted to the syntax of the communication act as a whole. With respect to semantics, the spoken part is much more informative, maybe much more important. I would like to present you three examples of prayers with requests for purification—without a purification ritual. We shall look for the significance of such prayers.

A first example is addressed to Marduk and his wife Ṣarpanitu-Erua. It begins in a conventional way with praise of Marduk and a complaint on the present state. The experience of evil makes the sufferer feel like an old man. Then the text turns to an analysis of the reasons for this situation:

7. O great lord Marduk, merciful lord!
8. Men, by whatever name,
9. What can they understand of their own sin?
10. Who has not been negligent, which one has committed no sin?
11. Who can understand a god's behavior?

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[31] C. Lévi-Strauss, "Die Wirksamkeit der Symbole", in: *Strukturale Anthropologie* I, (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1978) 204–225.

[32] Edition of the text: E. Ebeling, *Die akkadische Gebetsserie "Handerhebung"* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1953).

[33] The formula of choice occurs in 64,27 *šumma ina riksi šumma ina niknakki [teppuš]* "you shall perform it either by *riksu* or by *nignakku*" and elsewhere. Numerous examples in Ebeling 1953.—The terms for "ritual" are *kikiṭṭû* and *epuštu*.

12. I would fain be obedient and incur no sin,
13. Yes, I would frequent the haunts of life!
14. Men are commanded by the gods to act under curse,
15. Divine affliction is for mankind to bear . . .
20. Clear me of confusion *(e-šá-ti-ia nu-um-me-ir)*, free me of uncertainty *(dal-lḫa-ti-ia zu-uk-ki)* . . .
25. If my god has commanded (it) for me, purify me as grass *(sassatu)*.
26. Commend me into the hands of my (personal) god and my (personal) goddess for well-being and life.[34]

The complaint of misery is transformed into a reflection on human existence in general. The appropriate human behavior towards the gods is a typical problem for humankind; faults are inevitable. Sin belongs to the "condition humaine"; it gains the connotation of ignorance. The deficit of the sufferer is not moral, but cognitive. This is expressed by visual metaphors: "confusion" (*ešātu, dalḫātu*, two expressions of similar meaning). So the request goes in the direction of better understanding. This confusion ought to be cleared up and "cleansed" *(zukkû)*. The vocabulary is related to metaphors we know from the process of purification; especially *zukkû*, "clean", is typical. However, the qualities of impurity and of purification have completely changed in character.

Some lines later, the theme of purification occurs in a more specific way. Marduk is requested to purify the sufferer.[35] The meaning of the two difficult verses seems to be: If the personal god requests a cleansing, then cleanse me. The mighty Marduk is able to reconcile the suppliant and his angry personal god.

It is obvious that "cleansing" is not a central concern in this text. The theme is still preserved, but with a modified signification. "Darkness", "sin", "pollution" belong to the human realm in general; "cleansing" means the graceful divine turning to the suppliant, the reconciliation and granting of life.

There are other texts with the same tendency. I give but one other example. In a hymn that Assurbanipal addressed to Šamaš, we find the following passage:

I, Aššurbanipal, your servant,
who ever seeks out the ways of your great divinity.

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[34] Ebeling 1953, 72ff.; B.R., *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature* (2 Vols.; Bethesda MD: CDL Press, 1994), 591ff.

[35] The expression *kīma sassati* "as grass" is difficult; parallels make one think that the (burning of) grass is meant as a means of purification.

Cleanse me bright as your daylight
Let me proclaim your greatness with my mouth,
let me sound your praises![36]

Aššurbanipal presents himself as someone who "ever seeks out the ways of your great divinity". Instead of "ways" we could translate: comportment, or even character. The king is a seeker of god; this is his qualification for being cleansed, an inner qualification with moral and intellectual aspects. The light of the sun-god has a value as a metaphor; light represents life.[37] The text ends with the call for Šamaš's praise, which is very common in the šu-ila-Compositions, as in Hebrew psalms of lamentation.

Let us turn to a last example where the metaphor of the light is crucial for the whole composition. The prayer is addressed to *nūru*, the deified light, another name for Nusku, a god associated to the fire god Girra.[38]

Divine Light, intercede with Marduk;
make agreeable the utterance with Marduk.
Divine Light, when you enter the house of the sick,
smite the cheek of the evil, kick at the leg of the evil, knock at the chest of the evil!
Let the evil turn away from you!
Let enter concord *(mitguru)* with you
Let enter success *(šušuru)* with you.[39]

The enumeration of different aspects of wealth goes on: the protecting deity, abundance, etc., should enter with the light. Later on, the text suggests that the divine light is physically present by the head of the sick; it is most probable that there was a torch, just as in the *šurpu*-ceremony. But obviously, there was not such an extensive ritual as we met there. The light was present as a flame and as a metaphor, the terminology of cleansing is absent. The dominance of the language is beyond question.

The common characteristic of these texts is the lack of parallelism

[36] Ebeling 1953, 52f.; Foster 1994, 654.

[37] Cf. W. von Soden, "Licht und Finsternis in der sumerischen und babylonisch-assyrischen Religion", *Studium generale* 13 (1960), 647–653. Von Soden presents a sketch of the metaphoric value of the polarity of light and darkness; the relations between the sensual and the metaphoric dimension is treated with respect to the astral deities.

[38] On *nūru*/^{d}*Nusku* see von Soden 1960, 652.

[39] Ebeling 1953, 36ff.

between language and action. The idea of cleansing is processed on the level of language. This gives the concept of impurity and purification a certain flexibility. Mankind as a whole is affected by sin. A philosopher would generalize such an insight and would add: Mankind as a whole is affected by uncleanness and darkness. But the Mesopotamians were no philosophers.[40]

2.3 *The cleansing of the patient in* Ludlul bel nēmeqi

The composition *Ludlul bel nēmeqi* belongs to the so-called "Mesopotamian Job-Literature"; it deals with a righteous sufferer who calls in question the reliability of the world order.[41] He addresses his prayers to his personal god, he engages the ordinary ritual institutions for the restoration of his health and peace -in vain. On the occasion of these circumstances, the text reflects the problems of guilt, the impenetrability of God's will, the fragility of human existence, etc. Eventually, when the troubles have come to their climax, the patient gets saved. The supreme god turns to the sufferer, sending a messenger in form of a "remarkable young man of extraordinary physique, magnificent in body, clothed in new garments"; the appearance turns out to be a dream, more exactly: a series of dreams. The text seems to say that the sufferer tells his family of the first dream without being believed—everybody expects the death of the patient. The text goes on as follows:

> A second time I saw a dream,
> And in my night dream which I saw
> A remarkable young man
> Holding in his hand a tamarisk rod of purification.
> Laluralimma, resident of Nippur,
> has sent me to cleanse you.
> The water he was carrying he threw over me
> pronounced the life-giving incantation, and rubbed my body . . . (III,21ff.)

The elements of the purification ritual are obvious: A bough of the tamarisk tree, water, incantation, manipulations of the body—all this

[40] On the transition of mythical concepts into the realm of philosophical thinking cf. F. Stolz, "Der mythische Umgang mit der Rationalität und der rationale Umgang mit dem Mythos", in: *Mythos und Rationalität*, ed. H.H. Schmid (Gütersloh: Güterloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1988), 81–106.

[41] W.B. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960), 21ff.

is well known from ritual texts. In the third vision, there is a similar course of events. Apart from the young man there is a divine lady who gives an oracle of salvation, introduced with the traditional words: "Fear not!"[42]

The consequences of this cleansing and healing process are public; but the process itself is private. It is restricted to the inner experience of dreaming. The sufferer alone is witness of the unbelievable intervention of Marduk.

Admittedly, dreams always played an important role in the Mesopotamian cult.[43] There were incubation rites in Babylonia as well as in other cultural regions of the Ancient Near East and the Mediterranean area.[44] But this dream does not fit into such institutionalized dreaming; for the traditional cult, the sufferer's case is closed. The dream represents a unique, individual experience; the text as a whole is the model of unique individual religious experience. Needless to say, the tradition of such a text forms the paradox of typical unique experiences.[45]

2.4 *The purifying God according to* enūma eliš

Enūma eliš, the Babylonian "Epic of creation" ends with an acclamation for Marduk, victor over the chaotic enemies. He is praised with fifty names that originally belonged to other gods; now they are attributed to the outstanding hero and king of the gods.[46] Marduk is the one god who incorporates all divine qualities; we find here a certain type of "inclusive monotheism".[47] The idea of purification occurs in the context of the name Asalluḫi (VI 147ff.). This is the name of Ea's son, the specialist for incantations; the identification

[42] The formula *la tapallaḫ, "fear not!"* is very common to oracles of different types and has its counterparts in Westsemitic and Israelite oracles (cf. H.-P. Stähli, Art. "*jārē*", in: *Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament*, ed. E. Jenni/C. Westermann (München/Zürich: Kaiser/TVZ, 1971) I, 771–773.

[43] A.L. Oppenheim, *The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East with a translation of an Assyrian Dreams book* (Philadelphia: The Chicago Oriental Institute, 1956); as for the dreams in *ludlul* in the context of the incubation pattern cf. pp. 187, 189, 217.

[44] Oppenheim 1956.

[45] On the interpretation of *ludlul* see "From the Paradigm of Lament and Hearing to the Conversion Paradigm" (pp. 5–29 in this volume).

[46] F.M.Th. de Liagre Böhl, "Die 50 Namen des Marduk", in *Opera minora* (Leiden: Brill, 1953), 282–312.

[47] F. Stolz, *Einführung in den biblischen Monotheismus* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1996), 53ff.

with Marduk is attested as early as the Old Babylonian period. This name underlies a threefold interpretation:

> Asalluḫi was the name which Anu, his father, proclaimed for him.
> He is truly the light of the gods, the mighty leader,
> who, according to his name, is a protecting deity of god and land,
> in fierce single combat saved our dwelling-places in distress.
> Asalluḫi-Namtilla, secondly, they have called him, the god who maintains life,
> Who, according to his essence, restored the lost gods;
> The lord who revives the dead gods by his pure incantation,
> Who destroys the wayward foes—let us praise his prowess.
> Asalluḫi-Namru his name is thirdly called,
> the pure *(el-lu)* god who purifies *(mul-li-lu)* our way.

The name Asalluḫi is used once for itself, twice in combination with two other epitheta. Every name is given an etymological explanation; this is true not only for the names cited, but for all of the fifty names in the 6th and 7th tablet of the epic. Sometimes the explanation is correct, sometimes this is not the case.[48] Anyhow, the explicit explication and interpretation of these names is a sign for the beginning of an explicit theological speculation that we find in several texts of the developed Mesopotamian religion.[49]

Asalluḫi's protective function is mentioned first; the explanation of the name is related to the fight of Marduk against Tiamat. The second title belongs to the reviving power of the god. The "restoration of the lost gods" refers to the mythical events, too; it seems to be related to the destruction of Kingu who afterwards was transformed into humankind.[50] The third name contains the idea of purity and purification: Asalluḫi is the "pure" god. This is a conventional epithet of several gods;[51] it goes very well with *namru,* "resplendent". The interpretation is remarkable: Asalluḫi-Namru is the one who purifies our "way". Once more, we have to consider the broad

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[48] L.W. King, *The Seven Tablets of Creation I–II* (London: Luzac), 157–181.

[49] See F. Stolz "Von der Weisheit zur Spekulation", in: *Biblische und außerbiblische Spruchweisheit,* ed. H.-J. Klimkeit (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz), 45–64

[50] Apart from Kingu, there are other "dead" or "bound" or "overcome" gods, for instance Enmešarra are the dethroned gods of the Harab-Myth; cf. D.O. Edzard, Art. "Enmešarra", in: *Wörterbuch der Mythologie I* (Stuttgart: Klett); Th. Jacobsen, *The Harab-Myth* (Malibu: Sources from the Ancient Near East 2, 3, 1984). Is Asalluḫi important for these gods in general?

[51] K. Tallqvist, *Akkadische Götterepitheta* (Helsinki: Studia Orientalia Fennica 7, 1938), 20; Wilson 1994, 72–78.

semantic field of *alaktu*; it can be translated as way of living, and even character. Mankind is dependent on the steady assistance of god. Purification is not a single act but a continuous divine impact on human behavior.

3. *Conclusion*

As a conclusion, I will make not only some summarizing remarks, but I will also try to generalize them.

1. Cleansing the body is, among other customs of body care, a common human technique to mark the transformation from the natural to the cultural state. These techniques serve also as transformation from a "normal" to an "extraordinary", from a profane to a holy state. Of course, water is the central element of cleansing.

2. This transformation from profane to sacred is associated with other cultural techniques of transformation—for instance, techniques using fire with its power of annihilating, of transforming food, producing smoke, of burning clay, and of melting metal. The transposition of the cultural techniques into the transition process from the profane to sacred realm contains a modification of their function which becomes exclusively significative: Purification by water and fire *signifies* something.

3. This process of signification is not only produced by means of action. Language is added, incantations and prayers accompany the ritual acts, and the whole performance takes place in a room that gives a visual orientation. The different codes must not be designed in strict parallel, on the contrary: Normally, there is an asymmetry in the different codes used for a ritual.

4. Ritual communications such as purification rituals develop in the community; they are traditionally performed and understood. Modifications of these communication patterns happen slowly, according to new social needs. The experiences the rituals cope with are typical, repetitive experiences.

5. Occasionally, language gets much more importance than ritual acting and visual codification. With respect to the latter, language is much more efficient as a system of communication. Language is able to combine attributes of items that, on the level of performance, do not fit together. Fire, for instance, becomes the power of fermenting etc., contrary to the visual impression. Language can establish symbolic values that lie behind the sensually perceived world.

6. This is a presupposition of a certain type of generalizing: fire, for instance, becomes the power of transformation in general; the realm of humanity becomes the area of pollution in general, opposed to an eternally pure god. To be sure, this is not yet a type of conceptual abstraction, but a generalization by means of concrete experiences. This reflexive work is no longer the matter of a traditional community, but of an elite, of individuals.

7. Simultaneously with individualization, internalization can take place. The process of purification turns out to be an inner process that is no longer based upon common experiences.

CONFESSION IN ANCIENT EGYPT

JAN ASSMANN

> Speak your sins and they will be removed in everything you are saying.
>
> Intef*

1. *Confession in the context of illness and healing*

During the 13th c. B.C., a most dramatic change occurred in Egyptian religion and mentality.[1] Until then, misfortunes where attributed to demons, evil spirits, enemies and their magic and magic was considered to be a weapon, given to mankind by the creator himself in order to ward off these undesirable influences.[2] On the other hand, there existed also a notion of a connection between doing and faring, that is, the idea that good actions would be rewarded by happiness and success, and that bad actions would lead to ruin and misfortune. There is even an Egyptian expression for this idea occurring in the very same text that calls magic a weapon to ward off evil. In the Instruction for Merikare the teacher says: "A blow is repaid by its like: this is the dove-tailing of all actions."[3] This kind of connectivity, however, seems to refer, not to divine punishment, but, rather, to a kind of immanent providence which the Egyptians call Ma'at. Ma'at is what one could call "iustitia connectiva":[4] the principle that links actions with consequences. Misfortune, therefore, could be attributed either to the evil influence of some demonic agency such as a curse, or to the consequences of one's own evil actions or bad character.

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* Stela of Intef in Copenhagen, ca. 2040 B.C.; J.J. Clère, in Bull.Inst.Franç.d'Arch. Or. 30, 1930, 444f.

[1] For this development see my book *Ägypten eine Sinngeschichte*, Munich 1996, 259–277.

[2] Instruction for Merikare, see Lichtheim, M., *Ancient Egyptian Literature* I, Berkeley 1973, 106.

[3] Ibid., 105.

[4] See my book *Ma'at— Gerechtigkeit und Unsterblichkeit im alten Ägypten*, Munich 2nd. ed., 1995.

During the New Kingdom, however, a new interpretation gained more and more acceptance according to which misfortune, especially certain forms of illness, might be seen as punishment by an offended deity.[5] In these cases, magic was not considered to be a proper remedy. Rather, steps were taken in order to reconcile the offended deity. Some texts, all of them coming from the workmen's village in Deir el Medineh, give us some information about the procedure. In one of these inscriptions we read:

> "I will make this stela in your name
> And establish for you this hymn in writing upon it.
> For you saved me the draughtsman Nakhtamun."
> Thus said I and you did hearken to me.
> Now mark, I do what I have said.[6]

Here, a certain Nebre who had this stela erected on behalf of his son Nakhtamun, quotes the vow which he made in a situation of distress. Then, after a turn for the better, he erected the stela in fulfilment of the vow. If we may extrapolate from this and other examples, we arrive at something like the following order of events:

1. The first event is the experience of a crisis, in this case a serious illness of Nakhtamun.

2. The second event consists in publicly praying to the offended god, in our case Amun, and in making a vow to erect a stela in case of salvation.

> He made hymns to his name
> because of the greatness of his power.
> He made humble entreaties before him,
> in the presence of the whole land
> for the draughtsman Nakhtamun, justified,
> who lay sick unto death,
> who was under the might of Amun because of that cow.[7]

Here, we encounter two motifs that are of prime importance in the context of confession: the motif of public humiliation ("in the presence of the whole land") and the motif of guilt.

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[5] See Borghouts, F.J., "Divine Intervention in Ancient Egypt and its Manifestation", in: R.J. Demarée, J.J. Janssen, *Gleanings from Deir el-Medina*, Leiden 1982, 1–70.

[6] See Assmann, J. (ed.), Ägyptische Hymnen und Gebete (= ÄHG), Zurich 1975, Nr. 148 B 57–62; Lichtheim, M., Ancient Egyptian Literature II, Berkeley 1977, 107.

[7] ÄHG Nr. 148 B 32–38; Lichtheim, 106.

3. The third event consists of the experience of salvation.

> I found that the lord of Gods came as the north-wind,
> sweet airs before him,
> that he might save the draughtsman of Amun, Nakhtamun, justified,
> son of the draughtsman of Amun in the place of truth Nebre, justified,
> and born of the lady Pashed, justified.
> He said:
> Though the servant was disposed to do evil,
> Yet is the lord disposed to be merciful.
> The lord of Thebes passes not a whole day in anger.
> His wrath is finished in a moment and nought is left.
> The wind is turned to us in mercy,
> Amun turns with his air.
> As thy Ka endures, mayst thou be merciful!
> We shall not repeat our misdeed[8]

4. The fourth and last event is the erection of the stela.

Sometimes, these stelae were erected in times of distress and contain prayers for forgiveness and a promise to tell the power of the god or goddess to the whole world. These texts are commonly classified as penitential hymns (*Bußlieder*). In most cases, however, a stela was erected like our example after an experience of healing and salvation. These texts are called hymns of thanks-giving (*Danklieder*). There are many parallels for both forms in the Biblical book of psalms.[9]

What is most characteristic of these confessions is a certain pathos of public announcement, an intention of making known to the whole world a private experience of a rather shameful kind. This is how the hymn inscribed on Nebre's stela begins:

> I will make him hymns in his name,
> I will give him praise up to the height of heaven
> And over the breadth of the earth.
> I will declare his might to him who fares down-stream
> And to him who fares up-stream.
>
> Be ye ware of him!
> Herald him to son and daughter,
> To the great and the small.
> Declare ye him to generations and generations,

[8] ÄHG Nr. 147, B 46 54; Lichtheim, 106f.

[9] See Crüsemann, F., *Studien zur Formgeschichte von Hymnus und Danklied in Israel*, WMANT 32, Neukirchen 1968.

To those that exist not yet.
Declare him to the fish in the stream,
To the birds in the heaven.
Herald him to him that knows him not and him that knows him.
Be ye ware of Him!

Let us have a look at some other texts of this genre. The stela of a certain Nefer'abu dedicated to a Theban goddess starts right away with the confession:

I was an ignorant man and foolish,
who did not know good from evil.
I wrought the transgression against the peak
and she chastised me.
I was in her hand by night as by day,
I sat like the woman in travail upon the bearing-stool
I called upon the wind and it did not come to me.
I was libating to the Peak of the West, the mighty one,
and to every god and every goddess (saying:)
Mark, I shall say to great and small
that are among the workmen:
Be ye ware of the Peak!
For a lion is within the Peak.
She smites with the smiting of a savage lion.
She pursues him who transgresses against her.

I called upon my mistress;
I found that she came to me with sweet airs.
She was merciful to me,
after she made me see her hand.
She turned again to me in mercy,
she caused me to forget the sickness that had been upon me.
Lo, the Peak of the west is merciful
if one calls upon her.

Mark, and let every ear hearken
that lives upon earth:
Beware the peak of the west![10]

Again we meet with some typical motifs. There is the motif of confession and the pathos of public annunciation. The text proclaims the power of the goddess both in its punishing and in its saving and forgiving aspects. The experience of salvation is again introduced by the words "I found" which occur again and again in similar contexts.

[10] ÄHG Nr. 149; Lichtheim, 107–109.

The same Nefer'abu erected a stela to Ptah in which he mentions the particular sin committed by him in the confession. The inscription starts with a title like a literary work.

> Beginning of the declaration of the might of Ptah . . .
> by . . . Nefer'abu, justified; he says:
>
> I am a man who swore falsely by Ptah, Lord of Truth,
> and he caused me to see darkness by day.
> I will declare his might to him that knows him not and to him that knows him,
> to small and great.
> Be ye ware of Ptah, Lord of Truth!
> Lo, he will not leave aside any deed of any man.
> Refrain from uttering the name of Ptah falsely.
> Lo he that utters it falsely,
> lo he tumbles down.
> He caused me to be as the dogs of the street,
> I being in his hand.
> He caused men and Gods to mark me,
> I being as a man that has wrought abomination against his lord.
> Righteous was Ptah, Lord of Truth, against me when he chastised me.
> Be merciful to me; look upon me that you mayest be merciful.[11]

The motif of annunciation and publication is very prominent here. I think that it is precisely this intention which finds its terminological expression in the title "declaration of power". This even seems to be the designation of the genre. The term occurs frequently in this context. Especially the vow to proclaim the power of the deity to everybody is couched in the formula "I will proclaim your power to the fish in the river and to the birds in the heaven",[12] "I will proclaim his power to him who sails upstream and to him who sails downstream";[13] "I will proclaim your power to him who knows you not and to him who knows you"[14] etc. As far as the motif of publicity is concerned, the idea of proclaiming god's power to fish and birds seems particularly interesting. Brunner has devoted a little study to this motif.[15] He compares it to Christian ideas of preaching to

[11] ÄHG Nr. 150; Lichtheim, 109–110.

[12] Hui: Rowe, A., in: ASAE 40, 1940, 47ff., Helck, W., Urkunden der 18. Dynastie Heft 22 (= Urk IV), 2075; Turin 284.

[13] Berlin 20377.

[14] Bankes 7.

[15] H. Brunner, "Verkündigung an Tiere", in: Fragen an die altägyptische Literatur. Gs. E. Otto, Wiesbaden 1977, 119–124.

the animals. But it is obvious that we are dealing here with figurative speech. Birds and fish symbolize cosmic realms and the idea of an all-encompassing publicity. The whole world is to be told the power of god. The basic idea seems to be that an act of divine intervention in the private affairs of an individual requires public proclamation. If such an event occurs it has to be told to everybody. The manifestation of divine power is regarded as a miracle and has to be proclaimed. The Greek term for this literary form and function is *aretalogia*, the telling of the *arete* of god, his power, righteousness and efficacy. In the Greek world, especially in Asia Minor but also in all of the Hellenistic and Roman world we find precisely the same institution. Stelae are erected in order to make publicly known the guilt, punishment and salvation of an individual sinner. The idea of publicity and publication seems to be inseparably linked to the concept and institution of confession. Two reflections may help to better understand this link between confession and publication.

Firstly, the manifestation of divine power has to be regarded as a kind of revelation. In Egypt, the deities are remote and hidden. They are represented on earth in the form of images. Especially the Ramesside texts insist on the hiddenness of God.[16] The more hidden the gods, the more miraculous and spectacular are their unexpected manifestations. They have an appellative character, there is an obligation to make them known and to spread the message. Secondly, there is a sharp contrast between the privacy of sin and the publicity of confession. By its very publicity, the act of confessing is able to annihilate the sin and guilt of the person. Guilt has an isolating effect. By committing a crime, a person separates him/herself from decent society. The evil-doer forgoes the benefits of common confidence and communication and excludes himself from the realm of mutual understanding. By making himself opaque or intransparent to his fellows, he shuts himself up in the privacy of his guilt. This act of culpable self-isolation can only be repaired by an opposite act of public self-thematization or "self-publication". This turn from separation to integration can only be done in public; it necessarily requires visibility and publicity. What is not required here is an internal process of turning, of repentance or "contrition".

[16] See my book *Egyptian Solar Religion in the New Kingdom. Re, Amun and the Crisis of Polytheism*, London 1995, 133–155.

This is not to say that the ancient Egyptians were not interested in inner life, psychical events and mental attitudes. On the contrary, there are many contexts in which it is the heart that counts.[17] But in the context of these confessions, the heart is rarely ever mentioned.

In the afore-mentioned cases, the form of confession occurs within a procedure of healing. Confession is part of a therapy. If the connection between guilt and illness has been established, the only way of healing the illness is getting rid of the guilt. This can only be done by asking the offended deity for forgiveness and reconciliation, and the proper way of receiving forgiveness is confession. Suffering is interpreted as a kind of crisis to be overcome by confession, because the cause of the crisis had been separation and concealment. Confession reestablishes the link that had been broken by the evil action and which is a link connecting an individual with society and with a god. As long as the evil action remains the secret of the evil-doer, the separation grows. But the growing gap between the individual, society, and the deity can be bridged by breaking the concealment and by making the deed public. Speech and language serve as means of resocialization.

2. *Confession in the context of death and immortality (guilt as pollution, confession as purification)*

In the second part of this article, I would like to compare these confessions to an apparently rather different kind of confession which is a much more common and wide-spread conception in ancient Egypt: the so-called "negative confession" which the deceased is supposed to make during the judgment of the dead. At first sight, the difference between these two forms of confession could not be greater. We shall see, however, that there are also common features. Before making the comparison, let me briefly describe the confession before the judges of the dead.

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[17] See Brunner, H. "Das Herz im ägyptischen Glauben", in: *Das Herz im Umkreis des Glaubens* I, Dr. Karl Thomae GmbH, Biberach 1965, 81–106, repr. in Brunner, H., *Das Hörende Herz. Kleine Schriften zur Religions- und Geistesgeschichte Ägyptens*, OBO 80, Fribourg 1988, 8–44; Assmann, J. "Zur Geschichte des Herzens im alten Ägypten", in: Assmann, J. and Sundermeier, Th. (eds.), *Die Erfindung des inneren Menschen*, Gütersloh 1993, 81–112.

According to the classical conception, which dates back at least to the 15th century B.C.E. and persists until Late Antiquity, every Egyptian individual was believed to be summoned after death to a divine tribunal in order to confront possible accusations, to be purged of his/her sins and to be "justified" against his/her enemies.[18] The central scene or "icon" representing this idea of purification and justification is the psychostasia or weighing of the heart, showing a balance with two scales, one containing the heart of the deceased, the other a figure of Ma'at, that is, truth-justice-order. The figure of Ma'at symbolizes a complex of norms. Guilt is defined as a violation of one of these norms. A complex of norms functions both ways: it helps to prevent evil-doing, but it also generates guilt. This cyclical structure has been described and possibly discovered by Saint Paul and may thus be called the Pauline cycle. According to Paul, the Law which has been given to man in order to show him a guiltless way of life at the same time acts as a generator of guilt. Without a norm to be violated, there would not be any guilt. The Egyptian terminology points to a similar idea. A common denomination of the judgment after death is "calculating the difference". It refers to the difference between the norms of Ma'at and an individual life.

The heart, which is so conspicuously absent in our first paradigm of confession, plays a central role in this second paradigm. It symbolizes the "inner self" of the deceased, that is, his memory or conscience where the sins he committed during his life-time are stored. The test of the balance is to ascertain the state of the heart: whether it is full of accumulated guilt which would mean that it is heavy, or whether it is full of Ma'at which would mean that it is light as a feather.

The notion of accumulation and, thus, of time is central to the concept of guilt. Before continuing my description of the judgment after death I would like to insert here a short excursus on guilt and time. Ruth Benedict, in her book The Chrysanthemum and the Sword, introduced the distinction between shame cultures such as Japan and guilt cultures such as Christianity.[19] Eric Dodds elaborated on this distinction in applying it to Homeric and Classical

[18] J.Gw. Griffiths, *The Divine Verdict. A Study of Divine Judgment in Ancient Religions*, Leiden 1991.

[19] Benedict, R., *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword, Patterns of Japanese Culture*, New York 1974, 222ff.

Greece.[20] The distinction between shame and guilt is very pertinent in our context. Shame is related to perception, to seeing and being seen. The notion of guilt, on the other hand, is related to memory, to remembering and being remembered. In a shame-culture, a transgression that passes unnoticed vanishes and does not constitute a problem. In a guilt-culture, however, even unnoticed tranggressions stay on in the memory of the wrongdoer, form part of his person and constitute a problem that needs to be handled.

The Egyptians made the distinction between face and heart. "In the face" means an outward appearance of something, "on the heart" means an inward opinion or evaluation of something. The difference between these two expressions refers to the difference between a space of intervision and a space of interlocution. In the space of intervision, people are thriving to form and sustain a face to show to each other and the most important concern is not to lose this face. In the space of interlocution people are thriving not to show but to express themselves, to speak and listen to each other, and they form organs of expression and understanding. The greatest concern here is to remember and to be remembered. In Egyptian anthropology, the heart is the seat of understanding and memory. The sphere of shame is horizontally structured by social control and mutual perception, and the sphere of guilt is vertically structured by reference to the past. The horizontal structure of shame—the space of inter-vision—is dominated by synchrony, the vertical structure of guilt, the space of interlocution, is dominated by diachrony. The face is directed towards the present and towards synchrony, but the heart is the organ extending into past and future. Guilt is closely related to expectation and memory.

This relationship between guilt and diachrony can be illustrated with reference both to Nietzsche and to Egyptian texts. Nietzsche, in his *On the Genealogy of Morals*, demonstrated the artificiality of social memory, what he calls the memory of the will and what he believes to be not only a human phenomenon but a human invention, an acquisition in the process of civilization. This kind of memory is the exclusive property of man who is "the animal that is allowed to make promises".

[20] Dodds, E.R., *The Greeks and the Irrational*, Berkeley 1966.

> Precisely this necessarily forgetful animal, in which forgetting is a power, a form of strong health, has cultivated within himself a counter-capability, a memory, that enables him in certain cases to suspend ("unhinge") forgetting, viz. in those cases where a promise is to be made: it is therefore not only a passive not-being-able-to-get-rid of the engraved impression . . . but with an active not-being-willing-to-let-loose, a permanent willing of what had once been willed, a veritable memory of the will *(Eben dieses notwendig vergeßliche Tier, an dem das Vergessen eine Kraft, eine Form der starken Gesundheit darstellt, hat sich nun ein Gegenvermögen angezüchtet, ein Gedächtnis, mit Hilfe dessen für gewisse Fälle die Vergeßlichkeit ausgehängt wird—für die Fälle nämlich, daß versprochen werden soll: somit keineswegs bloß als ein passivisches Nicht-wieder-los-werden-können des einmal eingeritzten Eindrucks, . . . sondern ein aktives Nicht-wieder-los-werden-wollen, ein fort-und-fort-wollen des einmal Gewollten, ein eigentliches Gedächtnis des Willens.)*.[21]

Man, in order to live in civil society, had to cultivate a memory allowing him to make and to keep promises, to enter into obligations and to become calculable. This is precisely the diachronic space of interlocution which can only be inhabitated by those who possess this memory and diachronic identity (= being tomorrow the same as today and yesterday). A number of Egyptian texts point into precisely the same direction. In a text from about 2000 B.C.E. we read: "a sluggard has no yesterday",[22] i.e. no past, no memory, no conscience, no responsibility. The opposite, the ideal is the responsible person who is able to remember: *A good character returns to his place of yesterday, for it is said: Do for the doer to make him do. It is thanking a man for what he does.*[23] If the past is forgotten, people no longer do anything for each other, no longer repay good with good and evil with evil. In those times, the world will be "out of joints". This is a common complaint in Egyptian literature. Thus we read in another important text of the same period: "*To whom shall I speak today? The past is not remembered. Nobody does for the doer nowadays*".[24] If the past is not remembered, the social coherence disintegrates and the world turns into a arena of general fighting, a *bellum omnium contra omnes.*

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[21] Nietzsche, F., *Werke in drei Bänden*, ed. K. Schlechta, München 1960, Bd. II, pp. 799f.

[22] Eloquent Peasant B 2, 109f.; Assmann, *Ma'at*, p. 60.

[23] Eloquent Peasant B 1, 109–110; Vogelsang, F., *Kommentar zu den Klagen des Bauern*, Unters. z. Gesch. u. Altertumsk. Äg. 6, Leipzig 1913, p. 100.

[24] Berlin 3024, 115f. ed. Erman, A., *Das Gespräch eines Lebensmüden mit seiner Seele*, Berlin 1896. Many recent translations, i.a. by Erik Hornung, *Gesänge vom Nil*, Zürich 1990, p. 115.

"Lo people fight in the arena, for the past is forgotten. Success eludes him who no longer knows him whom he has known".[25]

Guilt can thus be defined as forgetfulness of ones obligations. Nietzsche's basic example is debt, the obligation to pay back one's debts and to keep one's promises. This relates to the future. The Egyptian example is gratitude, the obligation to remember and to answer received benefits. This relates to the past. The greatest sin, for the Egyptians, is greed or avarice. Greed destroys the diachronic space of interlocution and confines a person into the cage of the present moment. Greed destroys this kind of connectivity, which connects a human being to his fellow and which connects the present moment to the past and the future. The Egyptian expression for this connectivity is Maat. Maat, in Egyptian thought, is not just an art of living, but an art of living-together.

Maat is the principle of social and temporal connectivity. It keeps time and society together. He who lives according to Maat remembers and will be remembered. Maat is not only a body of prescriptions and norms, but also a promise of duration and immortality. Violating Maat, therefore, does not only mean to transgress a norm and to need punishment, but to lose a reward, to break a basic contract promising immortality to those who stay within Maat. Maat promises permanence in time which is conceived of as a memory-space. A virtuous life bestows permanence to a person so that he/she may live on in this memory-space of permanence. Guilt, however, prevents a person from entering into this space which is conceived of as a strictly pure and guilt-free sphere where only the guiltless is given access to.

Unlike shame, guilt accumulates. This is due to the specific relation between guilt and time. Every guilt-culture is, therefore, confronted with the problem of how to dispose of accumulated guilt and to develop techniques of guilt-disposal such as purification, confession, repentance, penitence etc. If these cultural techniques or institutions succeed in purging accumulated guilt on a regular basis, we may speak of purification cultures. If, however, guilt is accumulated inspite or beyond of these cultural efforts of purification, we are dealing

[25] Instruction of king Amenemhet I Millingen 10f.; Section V d–e ed. Wolfgang Helck, *Die Lehre des Amenemhet*, Wiesbaden 1969, pp. 35–37. Cf. Westendorf, W., in: *Göttinger Miszellen* 46 (1981), pp. 33–42 and Blumenthal, E., in: *Zeitschr.f.äg.Sprache* 111 (1984), p. 88.

with real or emphatic guilt cultures. Judaism and Christianity belong to the second type, ancient Egypt to the first one. In ancient Egypt, guilt never accumulates in such a way as to constitute a severe cultural problem and a semantic resource. Unlike the Israelites and the Greek tragic poets, the Egyptians were never able to make much sense of guilt and to convert guilt into a meaningful phenomenon. Egypt clearly belongs to the category of guilt-culture and not of shame culture. But within the category of guilt cultures, Egypt belongs to the sub-category of purification cultures as opposed to "emphatic guilt cultures" for which guilt is a resource of cultural meaning.

The Egyptian idea of a judgment of the dead can be interpreted as a purification ritual. In its earliest form, this idea is cast into the form of a ritual that forms part of the mummification procedure and is thus closely related to ideas of purification and conservation. We are again in a context of crisis and healing. This time, the crisis is not illness but death. For the Egyptians, however, this does not mean the end. There is much to be done about death and dying. It is not the end but another kind of crisis which can be overcome by purification. The mummification ritual concerns the body, the justification ritual concerns the soul.

In the present context, the most interesting feature is the fact that the justification ritual implies a kind of confession as well as the healing ritual we have dealt with in the first part. During the process of the weighing of the heart against the feather as the symbol of Maat, the deceased is supposed to recite a long declaration of innocence or "negative confession".[26] The confession which the deceased is supposed to recite before the tribunal is given in negative form. The deceased mentions some eigthy-two sins and declares not to have done them. This is the contrary of what "confession" normally means. The question is, however, to what degree the norms mentioned in the "confession" had any importance for the lifestyle of the person.

My thesis is that this is the whole point of the "negative confession". The ancient or mythical model did not provide any clues as to the conduct of a living person. You had to be prepared for any confrontations and any accusations. The classical model is a decisive step in the direction of rationalization. Now you knew against

[26] Charles Maystre, *Les déclarations d'innocence*, Kairo 1937.

which accusations you had to defend yourself. The Classical model thus provides a very close relationship between ritual and ethics. The ritual of the judgment of the dead now assumes a form in which it was able to influence the life-style of the living. In this list, the specific norms are spelled out which a person has to obey in order to qualify for the other world. Thus, one is capable of preparing oneself during life-time for the judgment, by avoiding to violate these norms. There is no doubt that the ritual must be interpreted as a magical support, helping the individual to pass the exam of the balance. However, this does not mean that it served as a substitute for moral conduct. Magic and morals did not exclude each other in ancient Egypt but worked together in the same way as magic and medicine worked together in medical practice. In ancient Egypt, every physician practiced magic along with his purely medical applications. He would never have thought of magic as a substitute for what we would call a proper medical treatment but would always use magic as a complementary way of reinforcing his medical treatment. In the same way we must conceive of magic and morals working together in the purification ritual of the deceased. Any guilt caused by violating one or more of the so-called "laws of the hall of judgment" may be "purged" just by verbal negation: "I did not do it". But this does not mean that a person may not try to avoid committing these particular sins as prohibited by the laws of the hall of judgment during his/her lifetime.[27]

One of the most conspicuous traits of the negative confession is its public character. This is also the feature that is common to both paradigms of confession. The deceased is supposed to make this confession before the whole land, represented by the 42 judges. 42 is the number of the nomes. Each one of the judges is assigned a specific town and nome. Their totality symbolizes the totality of the land which means, the world. Again, we meet with the idea that confession means publication. It seems to me obvious that the guilt which the deceased wants to be purged of in the purification ritual of the judgment after death consists mainly in secret sins beyond reach of secular justice. Many, if not most of the sins which the deceased is to abrogate in the negative confession concern moral

[27] See Lichtheim, M., *Maat in Egyptian Autobiographies and Related Studies*, OBO 120, Fribourg 1992.

prescriptions without any legal implications. You could not litigate a person for crimes such as making people cry, making too many words, raising your voice, speaking inconsiderately, winking to somebody, being arrogant, hot-headed, irascible, violent, being deaf against words of truth etc.

The sins to be confessed both in the judgment of the dead and in the context of Personal Piety concern crimes and misconducts that lay beyond the reach of legal institutions. Radical enlightenment has made the point that no civil society could ever be based on legal institutions alone and that religion is a necessary and inevitable invention in order to prevent people from violating each other.[28] We meet with this argument as early as the 5th c. B.C.E.[29] Reductionist as this argument is, we should not close our eyes before the fact that sin is a most forceful instrument of dominion and that the Egyptian idea of a judgment of the dead arises in the context of the state of the Middle Kingdom and its forceful political theology. The concept of Maat has unmistakably political implications. However, the same does not necessarily apply for the concept of Personal Piety, which views individual life as subject to divine intervention and the individual person, therefore, responsible for his/her ways of life, not only at the end but constantly during life-time. This view of a god-man-relationship implies concepts of divine presence that transcend the sphere of the social and the political and establish a specifically religious form of personal commitment and responsibility.

[28] Jacobs, Margaret C., *The Radical Enlightenment. Pantheists, Freemasons and Republicans*, London, 1981.

[29] Critias fr. 43 F 19 Snell.

THE DETERMINATION OF COLLECTIVE GUILT AND THE INTERPRETATION OF NATIONAL SUFFERING IN LATE EGYPTIAN THEOLOGY

Robert Meyer

When an Egyptologist begins talking about the theological interpretation of history in Ancient Egypt, he might perhaps be suspected of anachronistic thinking. If he combines this topic with reflections upon themes such as "collective guilt", "national suffering" and "the conditions of divine blessing", he is clearly treading on thin ice. The very late period of Egyptian history which I intend to discuss here, however, no longer belongs to the traditional field of egyptological research and is thus not necessarily subject to the standard modes of classification derived from the study of earlier periods. In view of certain frequent misconceptions with regards to late Egyptian culture, one should even strongly emphasize that the centuries following upon the first invasion of Egypt by the Assyrians (671 B.C.E.) are definitely *not* reduceable to an age of cultural decadence in which polytheistic religion continued to be practiced by force of habit only.[1] Quite to the contrary the period from the 7th to the 1st centuries B.C.E. is marked by an intensive process of religious resignification taking place on the background of repeated—and for the cultural elite no doubt highly distressing—experiences of discontinuity, namely the invasion of Egypt by all the major foreign powers of the time.[2]

"Discontinuity", that sudden and unexpected confrontation with the radically *different*, might evidently function as a catalyst for any type of cultural transformation process, as such experiences tend to have a destabilizing effect on traditionally accepted values, conventions

[1] For a history of Egypt from the 7th to the 4th centuries B.C.E. that isn't biased by an ideological conception of "decadence", see F.K. Kienitz, *Die politische Geschichte Ägyptens vom 7. bis zum 4. Jahrhundert vor der Zeitwende*, Berlin (1953). A corresponding history of the Ptolemaic period from an *egyptological* standpoint is still lacking.

[2] Between 671 and 30 B.C.E. Egypt suffered invasion by the Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians (twice), Greco-Macedonians and Romans. Among these, only the Babylonian invasion under Nebukadnezar (569) failed—or perhaps never intended—to inaugurate a period of foreign occupation. For this last episode see E. Edel, "Amasis und Nebukadrezar II" in: Göttinger Miszellen, Heft 29 (1978), 13–20.

and forms of self-awareness. They essentially do this by confronting societies with the problem of "irrationality", in other words by laying bare the limitations and inadequacies of that which a given cultural system defines as the given order of things, as somehow meaningful or simply necessary for the continued existence and prosperity of the system. Especially when combined with collective feelings of loss, experiences of discontinuity create a need for rational explanation which may in extreme cases lead to an attribution or recognition of guilt, but also to questions of theodicee, divine punishment and human redemption. Answers to these problems are invariably dependent upon the way such experiences are overcome, by whom they are reflected upon, how deep and long the suffering was or still is, and also upon the available cognitive and theological possibilities within which explanations and solutions might be offered.

In the case of Egypt, the history of which spans no less than three thousand years, crises did of course occur, though not all were remembered as experiences of discontinuity and even fewer involved explicit attributions, let alone admissions of guilt. The late Egyptian sources that do suggest or even openly admit to a possibility of collective or individual guilt, however, are part of an entirely novel attempt at explaining the causes of divine wrath and formulating the appropriate conditions of divine blessing. The fact that these sources share a common historical background with a number of Old Testament prophecies, but also with the conditions of divine blessing and punishment formulated in Leviticus 26 or Deuteronomy 28, is no less remarkable and will be worth mentioning, if only in passing.

The key experience underlying all late Egyptian attempts to interpret *history*—as opposed to isolated historical events—within a theological system of divine reward and punishment leads us to the years immediately following upon 663 B.C.E., i.e. that fateful year in which Thebes, the (at least) spiritual capital of Egypt, was brutally sacked by the Assyrians. For the Egyptians living through these difficult times, this was no longer a world of permanence in which one generation could expect to be followed in much the same way by the next, but a world of unpredictable mutability and insecurity. The inscriptions left by a man named Montemhet, who nominally ruled Thebes in the years before and after the sack of the city, give a good impression of the general atmosphere shortly after the departure of the Assyrians. In the inscription B from the temple of the goddess

Mut,[3] which he restored, he describes how it had become necessary to replace practically everything in the temples of Upper Egypt, down to the doors of the smallest shrine. His most serious concern, however, was of broader scope, as he himself explains:

> I placed [Upper] Egypt upon the path of its God,
> when the whole country was in a state of distress (. . .)
> I drove away the evildoers from the nomes of Upper Egypt (. . .)
> I spent the day searching and the night seeking [what is useful for God,]
> [. . .] making every passerby remember, proclaiming [the rules of] conduct,
> and gathering the ritual prescriptions that were in the course of being forgotten.[4]

This testimony is significant, because it documents an unprecedented feeling of loss that must be actively countered by acts of preservation, renewal and remembrance. The real novelty, however, lies in Montemhet's claim to have placed Egypt on the "path of God." A path is something that one may adhere to or stray from (or at least be ignorant of), it implies a willfull and emphatic decision to comply, in this case with the will of God. Admittedly, the expression "path of God" isn't entirely new in Egypt, as individual assertions of "walking on the path" or alternatively "on the water of God" go back to the early New Kingdom, where they were meant to assert a religious loyalty of some sort.[5] There is also evidence from the latter New Kingdom that being "on the path of God" implied the following of certain rules of conduct, especially when appearing in a priestly context.[6] There is, however, no use of the expression before Montemhet, in which it exhibits such a generalized scope or where it is said that one person might put others on the "path of God"—which could almost be construed as expressing a missionary intent. It thus seems that we are now dealing with a normative religious

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[3] Published and translated by J. Leclant, *Montouemhat—Quatrième Prophète d'Amon*, Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, Bibliothèque d'Études 35, Le Caire (1961), 197–212.

[4] See J. Leclant, *Montouemhat*, 199–200, lines 11–19 (translation 202–203).

[5] For these and similar expressions of religious loyalty in the New Kingdom see J. Assmann, "Weisheit, Loyalismus und Frömmigkeit", in: E. Hornung and O. Keel, Studien zu Altägyptischen Lebenslehren, Freiburg/Schweitz (1979), 12–36. For the expression "path of life" in a broader context, cf. B. Couroyer, "Le chemin de la vie en Égypte et en Israel", in: Revue Biblique 56 (1949), 412–432.

[6] Cf. J. Assmann, "Weisheit, Loyalismus und Frömmigkeit", 45–53.

concept, from which renewed divine blessings are felt to depend on. But is this also accompanied by a feeling of guilt or failure? Entirely absorbed with the task of restoration, Montemhet himself remained silent in this matter, though the generations following upon him could no longer afford to ignore the full theological implications of the disaster that had recently befallen "the holiest of all lands" (*hierotate chora*).[7]

The types of reactions attributable to this experience are both of implicit and explicit nature, and as such dependent upon the textual *genre* one examines, namely the prophetic genre (and related texts) on the one hand or the cultic-ritual genre on the other. We will later see that the prophetic genre indeed went furthest in explaining the repeated foreign conquest of Egypt by means of the principle of causality: (widespread) sin/crime → (accumulated) guilt → divine punishment. But let us first take a look at the more differentiated forms of causality in texts that have, in the broadest sense, something to do with cultic performance. The Famine-Stela,[8] for instance, preserves a text inscribed on stone around 200 B.C.E., but possibly dating back to the early 6th century B.C.E. (26th dynasty). It contains the unhistorical account of a seven year period of famine that alledgedly took place under the reign of king Djoser, who ruled roughly in the 27th century B.C.E., i.e. during a very early period of Egyptian history. The life-dispensing flood of the Nile having failed to come for the seventh time in succession, the king questions the wise man Imhotep, asking him whence the Nile springs from and which god resides there. Imhotep then consults the sacred books and reports to the king that the Nile issues from Elephantine, the god of this locality being Khnum, "the provider of Egypt." He also reports that the stone used in the construction of temples and the carving of statues is to be found in the nearby mountains. That night the king has a dream in which the god Khnum appears, uttering the words: "I alloted you precious building-materials, [the like of which has not been known] before, but no work has yet been accomplished with them, that temples might be built and those things repaired which have fallen into ruin."[9] The god then describes his temple

[7] Theophrastus, *De pietate*, fr. 2 (ed. W. Pötscher, Leiden, 1964).

[8] P. Barguet, *La Stèle de la Famine à Sehel*, Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, Bibliothèque d'Études 24, Le Caire (1953), 14–32.

[9] P. Barguet, *La Stèle de la Famine*, 26–27, line 19.

and its connection to the Nile-flood, without directly exhorting the king to restore it.[10] Upon awakening, however, the king issues a decree precisely to this effect,[11] while the end of the text even mentions that the temple's inventory was in a sad state of disrepair[12]—undoubtedly the true reason for the seven year famine.

Without any direct mention of guilt, this text thus exemplifies a reciprocal relationship, by which mankind—or the king as the exponent of mankind—acts for the gods by erecting temples in return for divine blessings (in this case the coming of the flood). This type of cult-theological causality is of course nothing unusual in the history of religion, it is probably even the rule. Not quite so in Egypt, however, where the whole topic of divine intervention was usually handled with extreme reservation and where punitive actions of the gods or even any clear expression of their dissatisfaction with human behaviour were *normally* restricted to mythical narrative.[13] Exceptions are found, e.g. in stories relating proto-historical events that are somehow relevant to the present, such as the narrative cycle of papyrus Westcar in which a corrective intervention of the sun-god is at least hinted at in the context of a dynastic change.[14]

Although this evidently has little to do with the theological causalities underlying the regular interaction of kings and gods, the Famine-Stela's use of the proto-historical narrative to formulate a theological position is certainly symptomatic of a new historical dimension in the cultic theology of latter Egypt. This becomes quite clear when contrasted with traditional expressions of cultic reciprocity, notably with the often depicted ritual of the "offering of Ma'at", during which the king presented a deity with a small figure of the goddess Ma'at—herself an almost allegorical divinisation of an ideal principle of social and cultic interaction—in return for divine blessings.[15] While the older examples of the Ma'at-offering may be understood as an exchange of highly symbolic objects that were practically devoid of

[10] P. Barguet, *La Stèle de la Famine*, 27, lines 20–21.

[11] P. Barguet, *La Stèle de la Famine*, 28–32, lines 22–31.

[12] P. Barguet, *La Stèle de la Famine*, 32, line 31.

[13] Cf., for instance, J. Asmann, "Königsdogma und Heilserwartung. Politische und kultische Chaosbeschreibungen in ägyptischen Texten", in: D. Hellmholm (ed.), *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and in the Near East*, Tübingen (1983), 345–377.

[14] See M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature. A Book of Readings*, Volume I: *The Old and Middle Kingdoms*, Berkeley – Los Angeles – London (1973), 215–222, esp. 219.

[15] For Ma'at in the cultic context, see J. Assmann, *Ma'at. Gerechtigkeit und Unsterblichkeit im Alten Ägypten*, München (1990), chapter VI.

historical significance, the Famine-Stela—as one may surmise from the text despite the fact that Ma'at is not explicitely named—has concreticised this reciprocal relationship by requiring specific acts of piety from the king in exchange for a no less specific blessing: the Nile-flood. The younger depictions of the ritual of "the offering of Ma'at", and especially those dating from the hellenistic period, would in fact seem to reflect this transformation.[16] Upon giving Ma'at to God, the king still receives it back in the form of traditional blessings such as stability on his throne, long years of rule and prosperity in his reign, but also with historically far more relevant promises such as the absence of political rebellion and protection from foreign invasion.[17] The king's "acting for God", furthermore, has acquired a specifically pious profile, since he is now qualified as "one who drives away impurity from Egypt" and "whose priestly duty lies in the doing of good"[18]—i.e. not unlike the conception of the ideal king outlined in Deuteronomic historiography—, but also as one who has come on "the path of God" (. . . .) "in order to perform Ma'at for the lord of Ma'at."[19]

The use of Ma'at to metaphorize the interaction of kings and gods evidently has to do with the very idea of reciprocity that had always been attached to Ma'at, though this concept had traditionally been anchored in the sphere of social interaction and thus held a somewhat marginal place in the phraseology of theological discourse.[20] By the Late Period, however, Ma'at had long ceased to have any social relevance, as it came to be replaced or rather *invalidated* by the so-called "free will of God", i.e. by the inexorable wrath or benevolence of an all-hearing and all-seeing, remote yet omnipresent supreme-being of pantheistic nature.[21]

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[16] Cf. E. Otto, *Gott und Mensch nach den ägyptischen Tempelinschriften der griechisch-römischen Zeit*, Heidelberg (1964), 24–27 & 74–75.

[17] For a partial recognition of this innovation, see E. Otto, *Gott und Mensch.*, 83–85.

[18] These epithets appear, e.g., in the scene of the offering of Ma'at published by E. Chassinat, *Le Temple d'Edfou*, Mémoires publiés par les membres de la mission archéologique Française au Caire, Tome X/I[1] (1984[2]), 29, lines 8–11. For these and other expressions of the king's piety in the temple inscriptions of the late Period, see E. Otto, *Gott und Mensch*, 63–83.

[19] E. Chassinat, *Le Temple d'Edfou*, Tome III (1928), 78.15–79.3.

[20] Cf. J. Assmann, *Ma'at*, 160, who views the "cosmic" and thus "cultically relevant Ma'at" as belonging to the sphere of "implicit" theology—as opposed to the "explicit" theology of religious discourse.

[21] For this process, see J. Assmann, *Ägypten. Theologie und Frömmigkeit einer frühen Hochkultur*, Stuttgart – Berlin – Köln-Mainz (1984), 221–282, esp. 258–282.

The survival of Ma'at in the sphere of theology is in fact due solely to the need to attach a connotation of reciprocity to the broad semantic horizon of "walking on the path of God", now viewed as the condition *sine qua non* of divine blessings.[22] This appropriation of the Ma'at-concept by theology is in some ways remindful of the early Deuteronomic conception of the Covenant, inasmuch as the (formally secular) concept *berit* in Dtn 7,11–12 is apparently not to be understood as something upon which the divine blessings are made conditional (as opposed to the keeping of the *hoqim* and *mishpatim*), but merely as an expression of the intense reciprocity underlying the relationship between God and Israel.[23] *Berit* is thus, at least at this point, nothing that can be broken by Israel and lead to divine sanctioning. Equally, Ma'at carries no connotation of active punishment in the cases we have discussed. But is Ma'at also connected to specific rules of conduct that might carry the threat of punishment in the case of non-observance? If so, they must have something to do with the expression "path of God", behind which one might perhaps suspect something like an Egyptian Tora or Leviticus.

The answer to this question is to be found in an apotropaic liturgy dating from the late 6th or early 5th century B.C.E., namely the so-called "Ritual of Felling Seth and his Acolytes."[24] Though outwardly nothing more than a dramatic adaptation of a royal succession myth known as the "Conflict of Horus and Seth",[25] the version of the myth offered by this ritual is in fact a masterpiece in religious resignification. For not only does the traditional god of storm and confusion, Seth, emerge from the text as a quasi satanic force of evil, but also as the perennial enemy of Egypt whom the gods once banished to Asia, from whence he still attempts to return in order to perpretrate his

[22] For the blessings given to those "who walk on the path of God" according to a parenetic text from the Ptolemaic-Roman temple of Kom Ombo, see D. Meeks, "Les 'Quatre Ka' du Démiurge", in: Revue d'Égyptologie 15 (1963), 35–47.

[23] Cf. L. Perlitt, *Bundestheologie im Alten Testament*, Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 36, Neukirchen-Vluyn (1969), 59–62.

[24] Preserved in the papyri Louvre 3129 and British Museum 10252. Publication and translation by S. Schott, *Urkunden Mythologischen Inhalts*, Erstes Heft (*Bücher und Sprüche gegen den Gott Seth*), Leipzig (1929), 1–59.

[25] For the sources and interpretations of this myth, see J. Gwyn Griffiths, *The Conflict of Horus and Seth from Egyptian and Classical Sources: A Study in Ancient Mythology*, Liverpool (1960).

evil.[26] Thus resignificated, Seth might be ritually equated with any Asiatic ruler who threatened Egypt—all invaders since the Assyrians having at least come by way of Asia—and be subjected to symbolic destruction, evidently in the hope of warding off foreign invasion.

It is of course important to bear in mind that this is an apotropaic ritual and as such not a textual genre in which any direct recognition of guilt might be expected, the more so as the ultimate cause of all evil and suffering is safely (or wishfully) located outside of Egypt. The text of the ritual is nonetheless informative, in that it contains a negative definition of that which the "path of God" actually entails, as Seth is explicitely defined as the one "who transgresses the path (of God)," but also as he:

> who created evil and brought about suffering,
> who turns his back on the laws and indulges in violence (. . .),
> the thief and lord of injustice,
> the ruler of lies and leader of criminals,
> who rejoices over treachery and hates friendship,
> etc . . .[27]

Another, much longer passage (from which only a few lines can be quoted here) contains a culttopographical list of the main temples of Egypt, in each of which Seth is accused of having violated at least one cultic taboo:

> (Seth),
> he has carried the abomination of Atum into the temple of the Ennead,
> he has caused an uproar, he has let out screams into the temple of Amun (. . .),
> he has planned strife, he has laid fire in the temples of the souls of the east (. . .),
> he has dined upon the abdju-fisch, he has eaten the ʿadju-fisch in the great hall of Heliopolis,
> he has interrupted the sacrificial service, he has robbed the (divine) offerings
> from the palace of the One God whose peer does not exist,
> etc . . .[28]

Turning to the sun-god Ra for assistance, however, the other gods indict Seth by making reference to a former act of his:

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[26] Cf. H. Te Velde, *Seth, God of Confusion: A Study of his Role in Egyptian Mythology and Religion*, Leiden (1967), 138–151.

[27] S. Schott, *Urkunden Mythologischen Inhalts*, 6.

[28] S. Schott, *Urkunden Mythologischen Inhalts*, 18–22.

O Ra-Harakhti, sole lord whose peer does not exist,
issuer of commandments, according to whose (spoken) words one acts,
whose judgement cannot be averted:
Remember that which you once commanded, when the rules were created!
You gave guidance therein, namely:
steps (*nmtw.t*) for mankind,
rules for the (cult of the) gods,
instruction for the king in his palace.[29]

These rules, the first group of which translates directly into *halakhot*, are thus what Seth has violated by transgressing the "path of God". The "path of God" is thus a metaphor for some sort of Egyptian Tora or Leviticus, the exact nature and scope of which cannot be discussed here, though it should at least be pointed out that culttopographical manuals such as the Great Geographical Text of Edfu,[30] the Geographical Papyrus Tanis[31] and papyrus Jumilhac[32] not only seem to define Egypt as a sacred landscape (*hierotate chora, templum totius mundi*), but also the Egyptians themselves along the lines of an *'am qadosh*, a "holy people"—a quality that did not escape Herodotus[33] and even gained recognition in the so-called "Letter of Aristeas".[34] What is relevant here, however, is that the rules revealed by the sun-god *in illo tempore* are in some way binding for all Egyptians and stand in some sort of relationship to divine blessings. But the only indication that an invasion of Egypt by Seth (meaning one or other Asiatic ruler) could at least conceivably take place because of Egypt's failure to comply with this covenant lies in a thrice repeated statement that the sun-god Ra has indeed not ordered Seth to return to Egypt.[35]

Does this mean that God can *actively* punish Egypt or rather that he may simply withhold his blessings? The extant texts give slightly different answers to this question, e.g. in the above mentioned papyrus

[29] S. Schott, *Urkunden Mythologischen Inhalts*, 16.

[30] E. Chassinat, *Le Temple d'Edfou*, Tome I, 329–333 and 337–344 (no translation). For a description of the text, see P. Montet, *Géographie de l'Égypte Ancienne*, Première Partie, Paris (1957), 14–15.

[31] Published without translation by W.M.F. Petrie, in: F.Ll. Griffith and W.M.F. Petrie, *Two Hieroglyphic Papyri from Tanis*, Extra Memoir of the Egypt Exploration Fund, London (1889), 21–25 with plates IX to XV.

[32] Published and translated by J. Vandier, *Le Papyrus Jumilhac*, Paris (1962).

[33] Herodotus II, chapters 37–42 describe a form of religious orthopraxy that is ultimately derived from a cultic concept of purity and defilement.

[34] *Letter of Aristeas*, §139–141.

[35] See the slightly variated formulations in: S. Schott, *Urkunden Mythologischen Inhalts*, 24,14–15 (speech of Isis to Ra); 26,3–4 (speech of Ra); 30,9–10 (curse over Seth).

Jumilhac, one of 42 culttopographical manuals in which each individual nome (or district) of Egypt is sacramentally interpreted as a holy landscape, for which specific rules of purity, moral precepts, taboos and rituals have been set in writing by the divine scribe Thoth.[36] The passage that interests us here was dubbed "Texte de Propagande" by J. Vandier,[37] as it contains an exhortation to comply with rules of conduct and ritual prescriptions that can hardly be anything else than those enumerated by the papyrus itself. More recently, Philippe Derchain has isolated certain portions of the passage as part of an attempt to reconstruct what he believes to be a fundamental parenesis of late Egyptian religion.[38] It is essentially this extrapolated version that interests us here:

> If the offerings are few on its (i.e. the temple's) altars,
> the same will happen in the whole land
> (and) life will be small for the living.
> But if the offerings are increased in this place,
> there will be food in the whole land
> (and) every stomach will be filled with the "staff of life" (i.e. corn). (. . . .)
> If this place is deprived of its libations and funerary offerings (. . .),
> the Nile(-flood) will remain small in its bed (. . .)
> and there will be a year of famine in the whole land.
>
> If Ma'at is not done in his city, in all matters concerning his temple,
> Ma'at <will> be called (= replaced by) sin (Jsfet),
> and the rebels will revolt in the whole land.
>
> If all the rites of Osiris are not accomplished punctually in this nome
> (and likewise) all his festive liturgies at the (proper) date,
> this land will be deprived of its laws;
> the commonfolk will mishandle their masters
> and the crowd will become uncontrollable.
>
> If all the rites are not accomplished punctually for Osiris,
> an epidemic will break out in the North and in the South;
> the demons (= foreigners) will descend and carry away the inhabitants of Egypt,
> the Ennead of Osiris having abandonned The Beloved Land (i.e. Egypt).
>
> If the figurine (of the enemy) is not publiquely decapitated (. . .)
> in accordance with all the rituals of the divine words,

[36] For Thoth as author of "divine words" and "lord of books", cf. P. Boylan, *Thoth, The Hermes of Egypt*, Oxford (1922), 92–100.

[37] J. Vandier, *Le Papyrus Jumilhac*, 129–131 (XVII,14–XVIII,21).

[38] P. Derchain, "L'Auteur du Papyrus Jumilhac", in: Revue d'Égyptologie 41 (1990), 25–27.

the foreigners will storm against Egypt,
strife and uproar will befall the whole land,
the king will not be obeyed in his palace,
and this land will be deprived of defenders.

While some of the evils that might befall the country in the case of non-observance are definitely remindful of Leviticus 26 or even Dtn 28, one may nevertheless still doubt whether this constitutes active divine punishment for incurred guilt. The year of epidemic, at least, seems to tend in that direction. A contemporary text belonging to a similar context, however, leaves no doubt as to the active quality of the punishment dealt out by God on such occasions, namely a parenesis inscribed on the walls of the temple of Denderah in the first century B.C.E., but undoubtedly composed some time before this date:[39]

If disturbance occurs in his temple,
then God will be angry at his city.
Be discrete! Be discrete!
It is good to be discrete,
for when God is satisfied with the secrecy of his affairs,
he will be thoughtful of his city
and bestow blessings upon its inhabitants and upon the whole land.
When God comes to see his property
and finds hords of people in his (sacred) district,
he becomes very angry on account of this.
When God comes to see his property
and finds the *House of Gold* in accordance to his Rule,
namely that which is in the scripture,
then his heart is satisfied;
he bestows blessings upon his city and is thoughtful of its inhabitants,
driving out all evil from his city and from the whole land.
He will bring a great Nile-flood in its (proper) time
and cause the fields to prosper with their products.
He will chase troubles away and bring about a state of bliss.

We have now finally stumbled upon the "wrath of God", which is actually a topic treated by prophecy and related texts, e.g. by the prophetically influenced autobiography of a man named Somtutefnakht, who witnessed the second Persian occupation of Egypt in 342 B.C.E. and, subsequently, the downfall of the Persian Empire at the hands

[39] Translated and commentated by P. Derchain, "*L'Atelier des Orfèvres* à Dendara et les origines de l'Alchimie", in: Chronique d'Égypte 65 (1990), Fasc. 130, 228–230 and 236 (translation).

of Alexander the Great. His autobiography takes the form of a hymn of praise:[40]

> O Herishef-Ra (. . . .)
> I am your servant and my heart is on your water (i.e. loyal to you),
> for I have filled my heart with you. (. . . .)
> You rewarded me countless times for this (. . .)
> You chose me out of millions,
> when you turned away from Egypt.
> You placed the love of me in the heart of the (Persian) ruler of Asia (. . .).
> You protected me during the assault of the Greeks,
> when you set about punishing Asia.
> Countless men were killed around me,
> but there was none who raised his arm against me.

Apart from documenting a religious anthropology in which the definition of the pious individual might be seen to border on the concept of *eved Adonai* expounded by Second Isaiah, the text also confirms that God is now indeed the one who actually directs and stages history, punishing and protecting of his own free will.[41] That Egypt was guilty of some fault is just barely, but nonetheless clearly hinted at ("when God turned his back on Egypt"), the more so as Asia is said to have been "punished" by God through the agency of Alexander.

A further exemplification of what the "wrath of God" might look like is also given by the so-called *Wisdom of Ankhsheshonqi*, a didactic treatise from the second century B.C.E. that includes the following parenesis in its prologue:[42]

> When Ra becomes angry with a land, its ruler will stray from "the law".
> When Ra becomes angry with a land, he will cause lawfulness to cease therein,
> When Ra becomes angry with a land, he will cause purity to cease therein.

[40] See O. Perdu, "Le Monument de Samtoutefnakht à Naples", in: Revue D'Égyptologie 36 (1985), 101–103.

[41] For this and the following examples of divine intervention in history, cf. R. Meyer, "Die eschatologische Wende des politischen Messianismus im Ägypten der Spätzeit", in: Saeculum 48 (1997), 179–189.

[42] Published and translated by S. Glanville, *The Instructions of 'onchsheshonqy* (British Museum Papyrus 10508), London (1955), 17.

When Ra becomes angry with a land, he will cause justice to cease therein.
etc. . .

Now that the "law" has finally come to our attention in the context of divine wrath, let us turn to true prophecy, where the concept appears with a special connotation. Two prophecies interest us here. The first is known as the "Lamb of Bokchoris",[43] the earliest composition of which probably dates from back to the 6th century B.C.E., though the text was evidently reworked in the Persian and Hellenistic Periods. Originally a political prophecy reflecting—*ex eventu*—upon the Assyrian invasion of Egypt, it was transformed into an eschatological prophecy in the 5th century and only slightly amended in the late second or early first century B.C.E.[44] Here, we finally find a recognition of guilt, if only in a small and damaged portion of the text, where it is said of the period immediately preceeding the Assyrian invasion:[45]

Men will no longer speak truthfully. [. . .]
Many will [. . .] in Egypt [. . .],
as they commit acts of injustice against [. . .]
(. . .) [. . .] temples.
The gods will not be able to take the [offerings . . .]
[Many are] the woes that Ra will cause to happen in Egypt.
[. . .] But (then) the Medes (Persians) will come to ⌈Egypt . . .] (. . . .)

The woes that Ra will cause to happen are obviously linked to the arrival of the Medes (i.e. the Persians, though the Assyrians had originally been meant), the more so as the prophecy later qualifies the decision of the sun-god to punish Egypt as a curse:[46]

Woe unto Egypt
[that will weep] because of the curse
(. . . .)
Behold the curse which Ra has placed upon Egypt,
beginning in the 6th year of pharao Bokchoris.

[43] Published and translated by K.-Th. Zauzich, in: *Papyrus Erzherzog Rainer. Fs. zum 100-jährigen Bestehen der Papyrussammlung der österreichischen Nationalbibliothek*, Wien (1983), 165–174.

[44] Cf. R. Meyer, "Die eschatologische Wende des politischen Messianismus", 177–211, esp. 194–200.

[45] See K.-Th. Zauzich, *Papyrus Erherzog Rainer*, 167 (I,14–21); and cf. R. Meyer, "Die eschatologische Wende des politischen Messianismus", 180.

[46] See K.-Th. Zauzich, *Papyrus Erherzog Rainer*, 168 (II,14) and 169 (III,12); cf. also R. Meyer, "Die eschatologische Wende des politischen Messianismus", 185.

With this mention of a curse over Egypt, we are now much closer to a parenetic text such as Dtn 28, in which the *ḥoqim* and *mishpatim* are set as absolute conditions of divine blessing, while the failure to comply with these leads to a terrifying array of divine curses. The Deuteronomistic hand of Dtn 29 subsequently summarized Dtn 28 under the heading of *berit* (Covenant), in accordance with the intention of Deuteronomistic historiography to view history as a sequence of broken covenants and ensuing divine punishments. Where *berit* had once expressed the reciprocal relationship of God and Israel, it now became a conditional contract which the Deuteronomist held to be identical with the Tora, since he uses both concepts interchangeably.

Interestingly enough, late Egyptian theology took a very similar step, though not through the agency of Ma'at, since it apparently wasn't possible to associate connotations of conditionality and punishment with this concept. Thus, another theological concept had to be introduced in order to infuse these connotations into the Tora-like expression "path of God." This was achieved by adopting the secular term *hp* ("law") into the phraseology of theological discourse, *hp* being the only normative concept of Egyptian culture that implied "punishment" in the case of non-observance.[47] Originating from the context of royal decrees, *hp* had traditionally been associated with the will of the king, from which it undoubtedly acquired the connotation of negative sanctioning. Only in the Late Period did *hp* come to mean something similar to an apodictic concept of law, in that its authority became (relatively) disassociated from the person of the king and its wording fixed as a source of normative orientation in its own right.[48] If we are to trust the evidence provided by an early Hellenistic papyrus concerning the period of the (first) Persian occupation of Egypt,[49] this transformation of the concept *hp* would seem to be linked to a codification and, above all, *legalization* of local Egyptian traditions initiated by Darius I (525–489 B.C.E.): a catalytic

[47] For studies on *hp*, see C.F. Nims, "The Term HP, 'Law, Right,' in Demotic", in: Journal of Near Eastern Studies 7 (1948), 243–260; D. Lorton, "The King and the Law", in: Varia Aegyptiaca 2/1 (April 1986), 53–62; W. Boochs, "Zur Bedeutung der hpw", in: Varia Aegyptiaca 2/2 (August 1986), 87–92.

[48] Cf. R. Meyer, *Vom König- zum gottgeleiteten Menschen. Ein Beitrag zur Typologie religiöser Welthaltungen*, microfiche publication, Heidelberg (1994), 272–298.

[49] See W. Spiegelberg, *Die sogenannte Demotische Chronik des Pap. 215 der Bibliothèque Nationale zu Paris*, Demotische Studien 7, Leipzig (1914), 30–31.

process that apparently superimposed the legal status of the Persian concept *dat(a)* upon existing Egyptian "obligations".[50]

One should nonetheless bear in mind that *hp* retained one very significant connotation in the legal texts of the Persian and Hellenistic Period, namely that of a "contractual obligation under threat of punishment". Once transported into theology, *hp* might evidently give the concept "path of God" an entirely different ring. This combination actually took place in the late 3rd century B.C.E., in a famous prophetic text known as the Demotic Chronicle,[51] in which "guilt" was heaped upon the kings and the current suffering of the Egyptians at the hands of the Ptolemies was interpreted in a way that is highly remindful of Deuteronomic historiography. The prophecy consists of two integral chapters (A + B) similar in content and purpose, though not in wording, and further split up into units said to have been originally inscribed on (at least 14?) wooden tablets. It deals with the historical succession of the last native Egyptian rulers in the period between the first and second Persian occupation of Egypt (404–336 B.C.E.) and prophecizes the renewed conquest of the land by Persians and Greeks, as well as the ultimate coming of a saviour king who will restore the cult of the gods, respect "the law" and initiate a new age of happiness. Each tablet is further divides into individual prophetic utterances of rather cryptic character concerning the religious loyalty of a given king and his subsequent fate. Each of these is then followed by an interpretation of the type:

> (King NN) strayed from "the law" (. . .)
> punishment was carried out against him,
> punishment was carried out against his son. (col. II,16–17)

or similarly:

> The fourth ruler who came after the Medes (= Persians)
> (. . . .) did not exist, i.e.,
> he was not on "the path of God";
> one did not let him be king for long. (col. IV,7–8)

As in Deuteronomic historiography, the consequences of the father's sins often fall upon his son:

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[50] Cf. R. Meyer, *Vom König- zum gottgeleiteten Menschen*, 273–274; see also P. Frei, in: P. Frei and K. Koch, *Reichsidee und Reichsorganisation im Perserreich*, Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 55, Fribourg (1984), 8–14.

[51] See W. Spiegelberg, *Die sogenannte Demotische Chronik*, 5–22.

It happened
that "the law" was not respected at the time of his father,
(and so) the punishment was carried out upon his son. (col. IV,12)

Conversely, the positive evaluation of a king might be formulated in the following manner:

The fifth ruler who came after the Medes (= Persians)
(. . . .) his time of kingship was made full,
as he was generous towards the temples; (col. IV,9–10)

though any deviation from this behaviour could dramatically affect his fate:

he was (later) deposed,
because he strayed from "the law". (col. IV,10)

We are thus dealing with a principle of divine retribution in which the fate of each king is made conditional upon his loyalty to God ("the path of God") or to "the law", which are obviously one and the same.

The prophecy leaves no doubt as to the divine origin of this causal relationship:

God will do unto you according to your deeds! (col. V,11)

The king who acts accordingly is rewarded with a long reign ("his time of kingship was made full") and the perpetuation of his dynasty, e.g.:

The second ruler who came after the Medes (= Persians),
i.e., Pharao Nepherites,
because that which he did was conscientious,
his son was allowed to succeed him. (col. III,20–21)

The fate reserved for the impious king is, as we have already seen, the exact opposite:

After a short time, he too was deposed,
because of the many impieties committed in his reign. (col. III,21)

The kings enumerated in the Demotic Chronicle were the last native Egyptian rulers and are apparently made responsible for the national disaster that befell Egypt at the end of the 30th dynasty. The very last among them, Nectanebos II, comes of worst of all:

Ptah, Phre and Harsiesis,
who are the lords of kingship:
you (i.e. Nectanebos) forgot them
while you were busy amassing a fortune, (col. V,12)

This greedy tyrant—whose fateful role in history could be compared to king Manasseh's responsibility in the fall of Juda (2 Kgs 21:10–15 & 23:26–27)—committed the ultimate sin of neglecting his gods while enriching himself at the expense of their temples. This last act of impiousness sealed the fate of Egypt, but was certainly not the only cause of the catastrophe. Following a cryptic description of the hungering Egyptian children and a final mention of Nectanebos, the prophecy continues:

> The foreigners are *made* to come,
> so that they may rule over Egypt after you (plural). (col. VI,15)
> (. . . .)
> It will happen again in yon time,
> that the Ionians (= Macedonians/Greeks) will come to Egypt:
> they shall rule over Egypt for a long time. (col. VI,19–20)

The fact that the foreign invaders are "*made* to come" definitely links the renewed invasion of Egypt by Persians and Macedonians to an act of divine retribution. But Egypt is not being punished because of Nectanebos alone. The following sentence: "so that they may rule over Egypt after you" is addressed to a plural audience which can only be composed of the pharaos listed in the Demotic Chronicle. Since most of these kings are said to have been deposed as a direct consequence of their sinful behaviour, it is very probable that their collective guilt was the cause for the downfall of pharaonic Egypt.

The parallel to Deuteronomic historiography is thus complete. The sentences "King NN strayed from the law" and "King NN was on the path of God" are to be taken as functional equivalents of the Deuteronomic expressions: "he did (what was) right in the sight of *the Lord*" and "he did evil in the sight of *the Lord*." Both traditions are based on the same revolutionary principle of divine retribution in history, as formulated in Deuteronomy 17:20, where it is said that the king of Israel:

> . . . . should not stray from the law,
> to the right or to the left,
> so that he may continue long in his kingdom,
> he and his children in the midst of Israel.

Both traditions also connect the religious behaviour of kings with the fate of their people. The justification for the downfall of Egypt in the *Demotic Chronicle* thus belongs to the same type of religious

rationalism as that found, e.g., in 1 Kgs 11:31–39 (division of the united kingdom of Israel), 2 Kgs 17:7–23 (fall of the northern kingdom of Israel to the Assyrians) and 2 Kgs 21:10–15 & 23:26–27 (fall of Juda to the Babylonians).

To conclude this rather long and difficult search for expressions of guilt in late Egyptian theology, which also attempted to draw a parallel to the Deuteronomic and Deuteronomistic transformation of the conception of *berit*, I must admit that my reflections on anthropology in the strict sense have fallen a bit short. For further discussion on the topic, it might be useful to consider whether the theological discourse traced in this paper also implies a transformation of Egyptian religious anthropology from a theological position of "atonement" to one of "redemption"—of a redemption that could only be gained by remaining loyal to "the path of God" despite the loss of divine blessing and the heavy punishment inflicted upon Egypt. The vision of salvation formulated by the prophecy known as the Lamb of Bokchoris might at least suggest as much:[52]

> When 900 years have been completed, I (= God) will rule over Egypt.
> And it shall come to pass that the Mede (= Persian),
> who had turned his face towards Egypt,
> will return to the foreign lands and to its outer districts.
> Wrong shall cease to be;
> "the law" and the care of justice will be (re-)instituted in Egypt.
> Retribution shall be carried out against them (i.e. against the foreigners)
> and against Niniveh in the nome of the Assyrians,
> because of the shrines of the Egyptian gods.
> And it shall come to pass
> that the Egyptians will descend upon Syria;
> they will rule over its nomes
> and find the shrines of the gods of Egypt.
> The joy that will be in Egypt cannot be described.
> He whom God hates will know bad times;
> he to whom God is favourable will have God's favour (. . .)
> The few remaining people in Egypt will say:
> "Would that my father and my father's father were here with me
> in the good times that will come.

[52] See K.-T. Zauzich, *Papyrus Erherzog Rainer*, 168–169 (cols. II,20–III,5), with slight differences in the translation of the text.

SALVATION OF THE IMPENITENT *AD MAJOREM DEI GLORIAM*: EZEK 36:16–32

MOSHE GREENBERG

The Hebrew prophets call on sinners—individuals and collectives—to repent ("turn to God") as the condition for obtaining God's pardon and for reconciliation with him. In its early conception repentance did not cancel punishment; cf. II Sam 12:13f.: David confesses his sin with Bathsheba and is forgiven, but the child he sinfully fathered must die. Such a radical effect is proclaimed only in a few texts; e.g., Isa 1:18: "[Mend your ways! Then] if your sins be like crimson they shall whiten like snow; if they be red as dyed wool, they shall be like fleece." The book of Jonah applies this radical doctrine to God's dealing with gentiles, and thus universalizes it: the corrupt Ninevites whom Jonah was forced to warn of impending doom were spared because each "turned from his bad ways and from the violence he had practised" (Jonah 3:8). Jonah protested against what seemed to him to be a miscarriage of justice, and was taught a lesson in the power of repentance.[1]

Jeremiah and Ezekiel, living through the death throes of the Kingdom of Judah and the beginning of the Babylonian exile (first quarter 6th c. B.C.E.) issue calls to repent (e.g., Jer 26; Ezek 18). But these are far outnumbered by unconditional announcements of doom. Both prophets came to despair of the people's conversion, and therefore believed that its destruction was unavoidable. Yet both look forward to an eventual reconciliation between God and Israel. For Jeremiah it will occur as a reciprocal movement of God and Israel, each impelled by yearning for the restoration of the ancient intimacy between them. Although Jeremiah does not decide whether God or Israel will initiate the move, he explicitly attributes it to the love of the parties for each other (see, e.g., Jer 31:14–19; more details below).

Ezekiel's doctrine of the rapprochement of God and Israel is fundamentally different. Israel remains incorrigible to the end, hence its

[1] See Y. Kaufmann, The Religion of Israel, Chicago: University of Chicago, 1960, pp. 282ff.

restoration is not a reward. God, on his part, acts purely in his own interest. The doctrine is expounded in two passages, ch. 20 and ch. 3:16–32. Since the doctrine is etched razor sharp in the latter passage, we shall focus our attention on it:[2]

> 36:16The word of YHWH came to me: 17Man, while the house of Israel were dwelling on their soil they defiled it by their ways and their deeds; to me their way was like the impurity of a menstruous woman. 18So I poured my fury on them on account of the blood they poured on the ground—and by their idols they defiled it—19and I scattered them among the nations so that they were dispersed among the lands; I punished them in accord with their ways and their deeds.
> 20When they came to the nations to which they came they desecrated my holy name, in that it was said of them, "These are YHWH's people and from his land they have come forth." 21I was solicitous for my holy name that the house of Israel desecrated among the nations to which they came.
> 22Now then, say to the house of Israel: Thus said Lord YHWH: It is not for your sake that I am going to act, O house of Israel, but for my holy name that you desecrated among the nations to which you came. 23I will sanctify my great name that has been desecrated among the nations, which you desecrated amidst them; and the nations shall know that I am YHWH, declares Lord YHWH, when I am sanctified through you in their sight.
> 24I will take you from the nations,
> and gather you from all the lands,
> and bring you to your soil.
> 25I will throw purifying water on you and you will be purged;
> of all your impurities and of all your idols I will purge you.
> 26Then I will give you a new heart,
> and a new spirit will I put within you.
> I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh,
> and give you a heart of flesh.

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[2] The following translation and explanations draw on my fuller treatment in "Ezekiel 21–37: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary", The Anchor Bible, New York, etc.: Doubleday, 1997, pp. 726–740.

Notable recent commentaries with which my effort may be compared are: Leslie C. Allen, "Ezekiel 20–48", Word Biblical Commentary, Dallas, Texas: Word Books, 1990, pp. 175–180; and Daniel I. Block, "The Book of Ezekiel", Chapters 25–48, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdsmans, 1998, pp. 337–359.

The issues dealt with in this essay are analyzed sensitively and in depth in Thomas M. Raitt, A Theology of Exile: Judgment/Deliverance in Jeremiah and Ezekiel, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977.

[27]I will put my spirit within you,
and bring it about that you shall follow my laws,
and my rules you shall carefully observe.
[28]Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be my people and I will be your God. [29]I will deliver you from all your impurities, and summon the grain and make it abundant, and not inflict famine on you. [30]I will make the fruit of trees and the produce of fields abundant, so that you will never again suffer the reproach of famine among the nations.
[31]Then you shall remember your evil ways and your doings that were no good, and you shall loathe yourselves on account of your iniquities and your abominations.
[32]Not for your sake am I going to act, declares Lord YHWH; let it be known to you! Be ashamed and humiliated by your ways, O house of Israel!

Explanations

Vs. 20. *they came to the nations to which they came.* A manner of speaking when there is no desire to be precise. Here the imprecision (repeated in vss. 21, 22) suggests a scattering of exiles and refugees among many countries, which gave the calamity a publicity that aggravated the insult to God, described in the sequel.

they desecrated my holy name. "Name" here = self. The primary sense of "desecrating YHWH('s name)" is: to treat him irreverently, usually referring to the wilful flouting of his decrees; so e.g., in 13:19; 22:26. But here the expression is applied to effects not intended by the producer. The exiled Israelites desecrate God not by any act of defiance, but by their very condition, as we hear in the next clause.

in that it was said of them, etc. The eleventh century Franco-Jewish exegete Joseph Kara explains: "The gentile nations would say of them: 'As the Lord's people, they must be dear to him, and if he were able to help them they should never have come forth from his land. He would have prevented it, were it not that his strength has failed.' Though it was on account of their iniquities that the Judahites went into exile, the gentiles do not think so, but rather that 'the Lord's arm is too short to save' (after Isa 59:1)."

This interpretation is supported by 20:8f., 13f., 21f.: there God is said to have refrained from "pouring his fury" on sinful Israel in olden times so that "his name not be desecrated in the sight of the nations." He would have been discredited if any misfortune befell

the people associated with him. Such is the generally held interpretation of the insult to YHWH alluded to here.

However, the terms of our passage allow an alternative interpretation. They evoke a different scenario that Ezekiel projects of the impact the last wave of Judahite deportees would have on their surroundings. Ezekiel regarded the homeland population as depraved, their conduct scandalous even by gentile standards (e.g., 5:5ff.; 16:27). He envisaged the survivors of the fall of Jerusalem, "scattered among the nations and dispersed among the lands," telling of all their abominations (12:15–16). This notion is clarified in 14:22ff.: contrary to all his rules, God will allow some of the wicked Jerusalemites to "come forth" (= escape) and join the exiles already in Babylonia, so that the latter may see at first hand their (vile) "ways and deeds" and "be comforted" by the realization that the fall of Judah was justified.

In this light, the offense of the gentiles' saying, "These are the people of YHWH," etc. consists of stigmatizing YHWH for the vile company he keeps. The continuation—"and from his land they have come forth"—will then mean "they originated in his land"; as, e.g., "Caphtorians who came forth from [= originated in] Caphtor," Deut 2:23. The initial position of the adverbial phrase ("from his land") is emphatic: the origin of these wretches is no other than YHWH's land. Thus the Judahites polluted the land during their stay upon it, and continued to disgrace it in their exilic state by their mere identification with it.

It is difficult to choose between these alternatives; the sequel fits both. Perhaps the suggestion of both was intentional.

Vss. 26–27. At present Israel's heart (the seat of the mind, of inclinations and resolutions) is stony; Israel is "tough/hard-hearted"—obdurate and obstinate (2:4; 3:7). After purification its heart will be yielding, malleable, impressionable—"of flesh," of the same element as its body. Implicit is the idea that presently Israel's inner nature is at odds with its mortal, creaturely frame.

my spirit. "Spirit" here is the animating impulse, translated "will" in 1:22. God's spirit is his impulsion to goodness and righteousness, his "good spirit" of Ps 143:10: "Teach me to do what pleases you. . . . May your good spirit lead me on level ground."

and so bring it about. With this use of *'sh*, and in a similar vein, cf. Qohelet 3:14, where piety is included in the determinisic worldview of the author: "and God has brought it about (*'sh*) that men rever him."

Vs. 28. *Then you shall dwell in the land*, etc. "Since you shall observe

my laws and my rules, you shall dwell (= stay put) in the land, and she shall never again lose you (cf. 36:12b). For it was your failure to observe them that caused the exile" (Menahem bar Shim'on, Provence, twelfth–thirteenth centuries).

Vs. 29. *I will deliver you from all your impurities.* "Impurities" = defiling evil deeds; for similar energizing of evil deeds cf. Ps 39:9: "Rescue me from all my transgressions"; 38:5: "for my iniquities have submerged me/they are like a load too heavy for me to bear." Ezekiel's figure of energized impurities is characteristically priestly.

Vs. 30. *take the reproach of famine among the nations.* Cf. 34:29: "they shall no longer be carried off by famine and no longer bear the taunts of the nations." David Kimhi (Provence, twelfth–thirteenth centuries) explains: "The land of Israel is more dependent on rain than other lands, hence it is liable to famine. The stories of the Patriarchs and of Elimelech (Ruth 1:2) attest to this. And when a person has to leave his land for another because of famine (as did those ancient worthies), that is a reproach (= a humiliation, an injury to one's dignity)."

Vs. 31. *you shall remember your evil ways.* Restoration precedes contrition: only after the people have been spiritually re-created in their land will they be capable of remorse over their past evildoing. When they are no longer obdurate the memory of their past obduracy will remain, to awaken self-reproach.

Yet the prophet cannot stifle his vocation to censure, so, inconsistent with the postponement of contrition that he has just announced (vs. 31a), he once again negates the people's merits and summons them to contrition immediately, now (vs. 32).

Exposition

This passage carries on the grand theme of ch. 20: the fateful consequence of the indissoluble link between the fortunes of Israel and those of its God. This link had in the past checked God's intention to "pour his fury" on faithless Israel lest their misfortune "desecrate his holy name" among the nations. It cannot be unilaterally annulled by Israel. The oracle of ch. 20 was inspired by what the prophet perceived to be the intention of the exiles to assimilate to the idolatrous nations. His (= God's) response was to proclaim the impossibility of Israel's ever escaping its subjection to him (20:33: "with a strong hand . . . I will be king over you!"). The present exile, a long

delayed punishment for sins accumulated during generations, would end in a severe culling of rebels, and a forced repatriation of the remainder, for the greater glory of God.

Our oracle was inspired by the gentiles' disdain of "the people of YHWH" who "came forth from his land". The oracle of ch. 20, dated before the fall of Jerusalem and the attendant deportations, had not dealt with the insult to God caused by the mere fact that remnants of his people were scattered among the nations. Whether the exiles betokened YHWH's weakness or their depravity besmirched his name (see comment to vs. 20), the lost honor of YHWH in the estimate of the nations must be restored. This could be achieved only by putting an end to the degradation of his worshipers, and afterwards ensuring that the disastrous course of events not be repeated.

That course had been determined by a strict consequentiality: in priestly terms the people's base conduct had polluted the land; the pollution set in motion the the covenant curses, including crop-failure and famine (Lev 26:19f.), climaxed by expulsion from the land (cf. Lev 26:33 "and you will I scatter among the nations"). But now an unlooked for effect resulted: by the very condition of being exiles Israel desecrated God's name among the nations. The remedy would consist of reversing the disastrous chain of events: first, the dispersed would be gathered from the nations and brought to their land—still impenitent, for God's rehabilitation cannot depend on the chancey repentance of the stony-hearted people. There they would be purged of their pollution—i.e., absolved of their guilt—by a unilateral act of God. Then the root of their evildoing, their obdurate heart, would be altered so as to yield to God's will. Because of their enforced obedience to divine laws they would never again be uprooted from their land, but would reside in it forever as God's covenant-partners. Nor would famine ever again disgrace the reformed people. All this would ensue not from any merit of Israel but for the glorification of YHWH—as only a reformed Israel could remorsefully realize.

Ezekiel's doctrine of a new heart combines a radical despair of Israel's capability to repent, with an equally radical certainty that God's holiness (majesty, authority) would eventually be vindicated and acknowledged by all nations—through the agency of his covenant people Israel. The link between God's reputation and Israel's fortunes guarantees that Israel shall be restored; but so that God's name never again be profaned, Israel's restoration must be irreversable. Such it can be be only if Israel be denied the ability ever again to

rebel. God's uninterrupted glorification necessitates the sacrifice of human freedom. Components of this scheme appear in the literature of the period.

In the penitential Psalm 51—dated to the post-fall age on internal evidence (e.g., the desuetude of the Temple cult, vss. 20f.)—the author pleads for divine help in his effort to be reconciled with God. After lamenting his congenital tendency to sin (cf. Ezekiel's metaphor in ch. 16 of the congenitally corrupt harlot Jerusalem), the psalmist prays, using priestly imagery:

> Purge me with a hyssop till I am pure;
> Wash me till I am whiter than snow . . .

Then after ritual cleansing by God he prays for a change of nature:

> Fashion a pure heart for me, O God;
> Create in me a steadfast spirit.

Prophecy in the late monarchy transferred the sense of moral inadequacy from the individual to the collective. That this transfer was not easy is suggested by inconsistency in the prophetic pronouncements on this topic.

Jeremiah's oracles vacillate between affirming, on the one hand, that repentance, initiated by humans, will precede and induce forgiveness (e.g., 36:3), and, on the other, that God must help initiate the process. Jer 24:7 is typical in its ambiguity; speaking of the exiles he says:

> I will give them understanding (lit. a heart) to know me, that/for I am YHWH; and they shall be my people and I will be their God, for/when they shall turn to me with all their hearts.

More clearly in 31:18f., he depicts Ephraim (representing the northern Kingdom of Israel), already contrite, imploring God to help him repent:

> You have disciplined me and I have been corrected
> Like an untamed calf.
> Turn me that I may turn,
> For you, YHWH, are my God.
> For, having turned, I am remorseful;
> Having become aware, I strike my thigh.
> I am ashamed and humiliated,
> For I bear the reproach of my youth.

In Lamentations 5:21 the post-fall community prays in similar terms for help in repentance: "Turn us to you, O YHWH, that we may turn."

But there are also passages in Jeremiah which announce the future bliss without the precondition of repentance; such is 33:6–9, where the healing of the people and their rebuilding precedes purgation and forgiveness. And in 32:37–41 the sequence is: repatriation without prior conversion, followed by the formula of mutual bonding, followed by God's gift of a new heart, followed by everlasting harmony:

> I am going to gather them from all the lands to which I banished them, and bring them back to this place . . .
>
> They shall be my people and I will be their God. And I will give them a single heart and a single way, to fear me all the days . . . and I will make for them an eternal covenant not to turn away from them, [but] to do good to them. And I will put fear of me in their heart so that they not fall away from me. And I will rejoice over them to do good to them, and I will plant them in this land . . .

This language is related to Deut 30:1–10 where the process of restoration is set forth: the exiles will turn in obedience to God; God will gather them into their land, and prosper them more than before. Then, "I will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your offspring, to love YHWH your God with all your hearts andsouls, for the sake of (*lm'n*) your lives" (vs. 6). He will "rejoice over you for good . . . for/when you shall turn back to YHWH your God with all your hearts and all your souls." In Deuteronomy, the people's longing to be reconciled with God is answered by God's enabling them to be permanently obedient—so they might live.

Perfect reconciliation is envisaged in Jer 31:30–33, the promise of a new covenant, written on the heart, i.e., imprinted on human nature:

> See, the days are coming, declares YHWH, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah.
>
> Not like the covenant that I made with their fathers . . . which covenant of mine they violated . . . But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel . . .: I will put my teaching inside of them and write it on their hearts; I will be their God and they shall be my people. So they shall not any longer teach one another—each his fellow—"Know God!" For all of them shall know me, from the least to the greatest of them; when/for I will forgive their iniquity and not be mindful of their sin any longer.

The future change will consist of an identification of the human will with the divine teaching; "knowledge of (= devotion to) God" will be internalized, so that a perfect harmony will exist between God

and man. It is a scene of bliss unmarred by coercion or remorse.

The motifs of post-restoration remorse and the change of human nature belonged to the dialectic of pessimism and optimism at the end of the monarchy. The old order had failed, but God, loyal to his ancient covenant, would restore Israel, and restore it permanently. It was not clear whether this would depend on Israel, or on Israel alone, or be an act of total or partial divine grace. Common to all the adduced passages is an ambiance of compassion and a mutual longing to be reconciled.

Ezekiel sounds a harsh new note in his appropriation of these motifs. He too vacillates between calling for repentance and despairing of the people's capacity for it (as in his oracles about post-restoration remorse). But there is no question that for him the change of human nature was not an act of grace. In 11:17–21 the change is an element of rebuke. The returned exiles will be given a new heart "so that (*lm'n*)" they obey God's laws in contrast to the idolatrous homelanders. In ch. 11 the motif seems too big for its context; it has certainly not realized its full implications.

The affront to God in the mockery of the gentiles ("These are YHWH's people . . .") provided a setting that released its potential. The restoration, crowned by a change of human nature, would not be a gracious, joyous divine response to human yearning for reconciliation. It would be a disciplinary imposition on wayward Israel of a constraint necessary for saving God's reputation. The development of the motif is epitomized in the "for the sake of" (*lm'n*) clauses: in Deut 30:6 the change of nature is "for the sake of your lives (= that you may live)"; in Ezekiel 11:20, "for the sake" of obedience to God's laws—as yet not further motivated. In our oracle, obedience itself is subordinated to a greater, universal value: "Not for your sake, O house of Israel, but for the sake of my holy name that has been desecrated among the nations." Ezekiel remains ever true to his relentless focus on the majesty of God, the safeguarding of which is, in his view, the prime motive of Israel's history. Linkage to God guarantees that Israel—all undeserving—will be restored and prosper as never before. As a message of consolation—for such is its function according to the collection in which it is set—it is singularly harsh; as theology its logic is inescapable.

WHO PRACTICED PURIFICATION IN ARCHAIC GREECE? A CULTURAL PROFILE

Neta Ronen

Scholars has often noted the obsessive anxiety that was felt about pollution and the endless preoccupation with purification in Archaic and Classical Greece. This topic was treated by length by Robert Parker, who examined the different aspects of *Miasma* or pollution, in early Greek religion.[1] My goal is to treat only one aspect of this broad and important subject, one that I believe has not received proper attention. In this article, I will focus on the specific characters who actually practiced purification. Who were these people? Why were they perceived as having special powers? What specific devices did they carry in their tool kit in order to perform purification? I believe that these questions will lead us toward an interesting path of discovery that may help us to understand the functions of purification in Archaic Greek society and the central role played by the individuals who were assumed to be able to confront pollution and to attain purification.

Since we are examining an early period and our sources are scarce, one may justly question the ability to identify the specific figures who practiced purification and especially to conclude anything worthwhile regarding their broader role in Archaic Greek society. Considering all the known difficulties, I will nonetheless attempt to show that we can locate specific figures specializing in purification and that we can arrive at a tentative collective cultural profile which seems to follow from an analysis of the evidence concerning the work of these individuals.

Some of the most enlightening evidence concerning the identity of those who practiced purification in Classical Greece comes from Plato's *Republic*. In his discussion on the rewards of justice and injustice, Plato criticizes the conduct of the "begging diviners" (ἀγύρται δὲ καὶ μάντεις) active in Greek cities:

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[1] R. Parker, Miasma—*Pollution and Purification in Early Greek Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983).

> Begging priests and soothsayers go to rich men's doors and make them believe that they, by means of sacrifices and incantations, have accumulated a treasure of power from the gods that can expiate and cure with pleasurable festivals any misdeed of a man or his ancestor, and that if a man wishes to harm an enemy, at slight cost he will be enabled to injure just and unjust alike, since they are masters of spells and enchantments that constrain the gods to serve their end. . . . And they produce a bushel of books of Musaeus and Orpheus, the offspring of the moon and of the Muses, as they affirm, and these books they use in their ritual, and make not only ordinary man but states believe that there really are remissions of sins and purifications, only by means of sacrifice and pleasant games.[2]

This denunciation of the begging seers and prophets and of their established position in the world of the Greek city-state is of great importance for the study of the role of purification in Greek society and of the influence exerted by the figures who practiced it. Plato provides a direct evidence of the strength of the seers, who were perceived in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. as having exclusive knowledge concerning the world of the gods as well as firm and abundant relationships with its inhabitants. It is these relationships with the gods, which are viewed as binding the gods to the wishes of these seers, that shapes and increases theirs prestige.

This part of Plato's dialogue illustrates the affiliation between the seers who practiced purification and the Greek aristocracies of the time, given that certain vital services these seers provided. According to Plato, the ties between the itinerant seers and the gods are obtained by means of special spells (ἐπαγωγαῖς τισὶν καὶ καταδέσμοις), which are perceived as having great effect on the gods. The nature of these spells is not clear and, unfortunately, Plato does not offer an explanation, but I believe we can learn about their character from his remark that the seers rely in ritual on books which they attribute to Orpheus and Musaeus. I would suggest, therefore, that these books were perceived as repositories of the spells that worked miracles on the Greek gods.

On the distinctive role of figures like Orpheus and Musaeus in Greek society in the fifth and fourth century, we may glean from the plays of Aristophanes: In well-known lines from the *Frogs*, Aeschylus says to his companion:

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[2] Plato. *Rep.* 364 B–E. translation by P. Shorey (London: Loeb, 1937).

> Just consider how all along from the very first they did you good the noble poets, the masters of song. First Orpheus taught you religious rites and from bloody murder to stay your hands, Musaeus taught healing and oracle lore and Hesiod all the culture of land, the time to gather, the time to plough. And got not Homer his glory divine by singing of valour, and honor, and right.[3]

The prominent element of these literary evidence is the lack of distinction between a poet, a founder of religious rites, a healer or a legislator. Although Aristophanes entitles Homer, Hesiod, Orpheus and Musaeus as poets (ποιητὰι), he assigns to each his own specialization: to Musaeus a mastery in prophecy and medicine, to Orpheus unique knowledge of the mysteries and rites, and to Hesiod an expertise in agriculture. So what precisely does Aristophanes mean when he talks about the ancient poets? It seems that a classification by profession differentiating between a poet, a prophet or a healer, is not relevant for an analysis of the character of the figures who practiced purification in Archaic Greece.[4]

As we have seen, Plato writes during the fourth century about itinerant seers who offered special services, remissions of sins, and purifications at the doors of wealthy aristocrats. But can we learn from Plato's criticism something concerning the identity of the figures who practiced purification in the Archaic period, that is between the 8th and the 6th centuries B.C.?

In the following, I will review some of the evidence regarding the work of itinerant seers in Archaic Greece and their association with plagues and acts of purification. As I have already mentioned, my purpose is not only to inquire whether these seers where really the performers of purification in Archaic Greece, but also to analyze their conduct and their assumed cultural apparatus.

In the *Iliad* the main figure ascribed with special knowledge and powers to offer atonement for sins and a cure for the raving plague

[3] Arist. *Frogs* 1030–1036, translation by B.B. Rogers (London: Loeb, 1924). For a detailed discussion of the evidence concerning Orpheus prior to 300 B.C. see I.M. Linforth, *The Arts of Orpheus* (New York: Arno Press, 1973), 1–173; see also: W.K.C. Guthrie, *Orpheus and Greek Religion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

[4] Linforth suggests that since the profession was perceived as more important then the actual character who practiced it, it is possible that traditions attributed to famous characters like Orpheus and Musaeus the work of many others. Linforth, 73–74.

is the prophet Calchas.[5] Calchas was the man who navigated the Greek ships to Troy by means of the power exclusively given to him by Apollo. He is described as the best of diviners, as having knowledge of all things that had occurred in the past and in the present and that were to transpire in the future.[6] Calchas was summoned to the Greek warriors' assembly in Troy in order to explain the cause and to suggest a cure for the plague that had ravaged the Greek army or, in the words of Achilles:

> Let us ask some seer or priest yea, or some reader of dreams—for a dream is too from Zeus—who may haply tell us for what cause Phoebus Apollon has conceived such anger, whether it be because of a vow that he blames us, or of a hecatomb; in hope that perchance he may accept the savour of lambs and unblemished goats, and be minded to ward off from us the pestilence.[7]

Notice that according to the *Iliad* Achilles knows exactly which god sent the plague,[8] but he still needs Calchas, perhaps, for reasons of propaganda, to interpret its cause. Calchas does not speak freely since he is concerned that his answer may offend the Greek leader, Agamemnon. Thus he addresses the assembly only after Achilles promises to protect him and to safeguard his wellbeing.[9] Calchas then speaks and states the reason for the plague and the steps the Greeks have to take in order to rid themselves of it. Apollo is furious, he claims, because Agamemnon took his priest's daughter and will neither give her back nor accept a ransom. The god will not call off the plague until the Greeks will return the priest's daughter unransomed, to her father; only then may we ask for his forgiveness.[10] Agamemnon is enraged: he attacks Calchas and insults him, but clearly he cannot disregard his ruling.[11] Odysseus is sent to deliver the priest's daughter back to her father. He and his delegation sacrifice a hecatomb to Apollo, offered up according to custom. Apollo's priest

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[5] For additional sources concerning Calchas see A. Bouché-Leclercq, *Histoire de la divination dans l'antiquité* (Bruxelles: *Culture et Civilisation*, 1963), vol. 2, 43–46.

[6] Il. 1.69–72. According to Bremmer Calchas is the model of the Archaic Greek seer par excellance, see J.N. Bremmer, "The Status and the Symbolic Capital of the Seer", *The Role of Religion in the Early Greek Polis*—Proceedings of the Third International Seminar on Ancient Greek Cult, R. [Hägg] (ed.) (Stockholm, 1996), 98.

[7] *Il.* 1.62–67, translation by A.T. Murray (London: Loeb, 1924).

[8] *Il.* 1.64.

[9] *Il.* 1.74–91.

[10] *Il.* 1.92–100.

[11] *Il.* 1.102–120.

who has won his daughter back lifts up his hands and prays, begging the god to stop the plague. The Greek delegation having complied with traditional ceremony, reconciles the god and the plague ceases.[12]

Calchas therefore plays a key role in this story. On account of his exclusive knowledge of past, present and future, he is able to determine the cause of the plague and to administer a cure. Not even Agamemnon can defy Calchas' powers and his weighty position in the Greek assembly. Another important figure is that of Apollo's priest: it is he who turned to the god and asked for the revenge that caused such damage to the Greek army, and after wining his daughter back, it is again he who turns once more to Apollo and begs for relief. Thus at least in this scene of the *Iliad, Apollo*'s priest appears as the character having the power to ask for curse as well as for personal favors from the gods, while Calchas the diviner exhibits unique powers of explanation and commentary and is therefore the mediator between men and the gods.

One of the most interesting figures in our study is that of Melampus the seer. Although his name appears in the *Odyssey*,[13] I want to focus on Herodotus' story about Melampus and the women of Argos. Melampus is summoned to Argos in order to heal the madness that had struck the women of Argos. After long negotiations as to the compensation for his work, Melampus cures the women and he and his brother are rewarded with two-thirds of all Argive soil.[14] Apollodorus mentions the same story[15] and claims that there is no agreement concerning the cause of the madness: According to Hesiod, it was because the women refused to accept the cult of Dionysus but according to Acusilaus it was because they disparaged Hera's wooden image.[16] Hence, despite the lack of agreement as to the nature of the women's sin, it is clearly depicted as a transgression against a

[12] *Il.* 1.430–474.

[13] *Od.* 15.225–240; 11.288–297.

[14] Hdt. 9.34.

[15] Apollodorus notes that Melampus' adventures in Argos were known already to Hesiod, Apoll. 2.2.2; Hes. Cat. 18.

[16] For a suggestion that there is a confusion in the mythografic tradition between two different stories, one telling of the madness that Hera inflicted on the daughters of Proetus and the second telling of the women of Argos during the reign of king Anaxagoras, who went mad because they refused to accept the cult of *Dionysus*, see M.L. West, *The Hesiodic Catalogue of Women: Its Nature, Structure and Origins* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 78–79.

local deity or against a religious rite. Since Herodotus presents Melampus as the initiator of the cult of Dionysus in Greece,[17] I would suggest that the sin of the women from Argos has to do with their refusal to accept the rites in honor of Dionysus.

In any case, Apollodorus relates that Melampus was a seer and the first to devise cures using drugs and purification (μάντις ὢν καὶ τὴν διὰ φαρμάκων καὶ καθαρμῶν θεραπείαν πρῶτος εὑρηκώς). Melampus obtained his special powers from snakes which he nurtured while they were young. These snakes would stand on his shoulders and whisper in his ears. Through them, Melampus came to know and understand the cries of flying birds and was thus able to foretell the future.[18] Our sources state that Melampus cured the women only after the ruler of Argos yielded to his demands. The remedy for the "pollution" was obtained with the help of the most powerful Argive young men. While shouting and dancing, Melampus, accompanied by these young Argive men, chased the mad women. Despite one of the women dying in consequence of the treatment, the rest were restored to health. Purification was obtained.[19]

Before discussing the stories about Melampus, let me mention Epimenides, a seer and healer from Crete. Epimenides was invited to Athens sometime at the beginning of the sixth century, a time of great trouble for the city. Megara attacked Athens, who had lost her hold in Salamis. Signs were revealed to local seers, who claimed that there was a pollution in the city, connected to a murder of Kylon's supporters, that had defiled the sanctity of a temple, about forty years earlier. This is the background for the seer's mission in Athens. According to Plutarch, Epimenides' record was that of a man loved by the gods with great knowledge, acquired through inspiration, concerning the world of the gods.[20] After coming to Athens, Epimenides became a close friend of Solon, the famous Athenian legislator and

[17] Herodotus claims that Melampus, through knowledge derived from Egypt, took part in initiating in Greece the cult of Dionysus, especially the processions. He adds that he believes that Melampus acquired this knowledge from Cadmus of Tyre, Hdt. 2.49.

[18] Apoll. 1.9.11. Frezer discusses some characters who were famous for their unique relationships with snakes, who taught them the language of the animals: J.G. Frazer, *Apollodorus—The Library* (London: Loeb, 1939), 86–87.

[19] Apoll. 2.2.2. For additional sources concerning Melampus see A. Bouché-Leclercq, vol. 2, 13–18.

[20] Plut. *Sol.* 12.4.

became involved with his activities. According to Aristotle Epimenides' primary action was to purify the city by founding new holy places, new cults, and purification rites.[21] Plutarch describes Epimenides' operations in Athens in the following words:

> He made the Athenians decorous and careful in their religious services, and milder in their rites of mourning, by attaching certain sacrifices immediately to their funeral ceremonies, and by removing the harsh and barbaric practices in which their women had usually indulged up to that time. Most important of all, by sundry rites of propitiation and purification, and by sacred foundations, he hallowed and consecrated the city, and brought it to be observant of justice and more easily inclined to unanimity.[22]

Two more literary sources dealing with Epimenides add important information concerning this character: Aristotle concludes that Epimenides' task was not the prediction of the future but the discussion and the explanation of things that happened in the past but are obscure.[23] Pausanias writes that Epimenides had slept forty years in a cave and that after he had awakened, he began to write poetry and purified cities.[24]

These stories about Calchas, Melampus, and Epimenides, their exclusive powers and the circumstances of their arrival and activities in the Greek cities, contain valuable information concerning the identity of the figures who practiced purification in Archaic Greece and their cultural apparatus:

1. Calchas and Epimenides are depicted in our sources as having singular relationships with the gods, and as being able to foretell the future and explain the past. However their predictive ability are not uniform: Calchas' predictive abilities are described as unlimited. We should notice, that as was emphasized by Detienne, Hesiod, the famous Greek poet, attributes exactly the same powers to himself, that is to know about the past, the present and the future.[25] Epimenides'

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[21] Aristo *Athe. Pol.* 1.

[22] Plut. *Sol.* 12.4–5, translation by B. Perrin (London: Loeb, 1914). For additional discussion of Epimenides task in Athens see: K. Freeman, *The Work and Life of Solon* (New York: Arno Press, 1976), 165–168; R. Parker, *Athenian Religion: A History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 50.

[23] Aristo *Rhet.* 3.17.10.

[24] Paus. 1.14.4; For additional sources concerning Epimenides see A. Bouché-Leclercq, vol. 2, 99–102.

[25] Theog. 32; 38. M. Detienne, *The Masters of Truth in Archaic Greece* New York: Zone Books, 1996), 39.

capabilities are more specific: He only explains and comments upon obscure events that happened in the past.

2. Melampus and Epimenides are described as foreigners coming to the rescue at times of great distress. Healers and seers are equated in the *Odyssey* with singers and builders as foreigners that each community should attempt to acquire.[26] The fact that these seers are strangers is consistently emphasized: Melampus came to Argos from Pylos. In fact, the story of the healing of the women offers an explanation as to the arrival in Argos of a stranger who later became the father of a great family in the city. The fact that Epimenides was a stranger in Athens is even further stressed, as opposed to Melampus, Epimenides was not granted with lands in Athens and nor did he become a resident of the city. Epimenides from Crete came to Athens for a specific reason and, having completed his mission, he left the city. It seems to me that this common feature in the seer's biography is not unimportant. A significant part of the seer's tool kit, that which enables him to preform purification rites, is his being a stranger coming from afar.

3. One of the prominent features of the seer's character is their wanderings. Melampus' adventures are described at length in the *Odyssey*[27] while Herodotus ascribes to him a journey to Egypt, a relationship with Cadmus from Tyre and his famous mission in Argos. Our sources attribute to Epimenides a 40-year slumber in a cave in Crete, voyages to Athens and to Sparta, and the purification of many cities. Thus, we may assume that the exploits, wanderings and encounters with famous individuals created a special aura about the seer's activity and enabled him or his clients to claim his having unique and up-to-date knowledge.

4. As to the rewards for their actions, Melampus and Epimenides differ. Melampus holds a long and irritating negotiation with respect to his fee. He is not described as acting solely for the benefit of the community. He was invited for a specific cause and not being an altruist set the price in advance. Epimenides, on the contrary, refuses the abundant gifts and honors offered him by the Athenians. He takes only a branch from Athens' sacred olive tree, which may have

[26] *Od.* 17.382–387. W. Burkert, *The Orientalizing Revolution—Near Eastern Influence on Greek Culture in Early Archaic Age* (London: Harvard University Press, 1992), 241.
[27] *Od.* 15.225–240; Il. 288–297.

been very valuable and perhaps priceless for the itinerant seer. Although it is possible that Herodotus exaggerates in his descriptions of Melampus' negotiations it seems, in light of Plato's criticism, that pay was certainly a crucial issue in the dealings between the seers and their clients.

5. The three—Calchas, Epimenides and Melampus—establish firm affiliations with the Greek aristocracy: Calchas condemns the actions of Agamemnon, yet wins the support and protection from another Greek leader, Achilles; Melampus marries one of the women he purified, the daughter of the king of Argos and becomes a substantial landowner. Epimenides is depicted as Solon's personal friend and ally, who actively participates in Solon's comprehensive reform. These close relationships between the seers and the aristocracy comply with Plato's descriptions of the prophets and accounts for their solid position in Greek Archaic society as well as their ability to impose their judgments.

6. Our sources state that Melampus was the first seer who cured using drugs and purification. According to Herodotus, Melampus acquired his knowledge about the Dionysian rites in Egypt and through personal contacts with Cadmus of Tyre. The origin of his special ability to foretell the future is attributed to his friendship with the snakes. Unfortunately, the stories about Melampus do not account for his knowledge of medicine and purification. Both Calchas and Epimenides are described as having close, personal relationships with the gods: Calchas owes his abilities to Apollo's guidance while Epimenides is depicted as being loved by the gods and as acquiring knowledge about the gods through inspiration (ἐνθουσιάζω). It is also suggested that Epimenides' knowledge is the outcome of his habit of sleeping in caves very long periods of time.

7. The help of Melampus, Epimenides and Calchas is required during emergency. We can thus conclude that these seers are viewed as having the appropriate knowledge and means for resolving severe crises threatening society. In all three cases, described here, the crises are presumably caused by unreligious acts: To repeat, by taking the priests' daughter and not accepting his ransom, Agamemnon insulted Apollo's priest who then begged the god for revenge. Depending upon the source, the women from Argos refused to accept rites in honor of Dionysus or harmed Hera's wooden image. Irrespective of the details, both sources attribute the women's madness to an offensive behavior which insulted the gods. The local seers in Athens declared

the cause of the crisis was the profane act of murder that violated the sanctity of a temple. The outcome in all cases is a plague: The *Iliad* describes a deadly plague (λοιμός) that killed first the mules and the dogs, and thereafter the warriors themselves. Melampus is attributed with the healing of the plague which had to do with the mind (νόσος), the symptoms of which are the women's leaving of their homes and running to the desert. The descriptions of the situation which predated the plague and Epimenides' arrival documents only a military defeat and a general anxiety in the city. Thus, we see that the reasons for summoning the seers vary and the nature of the pollution that the city incurred is not always clear. In the case described in the *Iliad*, the Greeks seem to face a real threat while in the cases of Argos and Athens, it appears that Melampus and Epimenides are engaged in more general reform, or that the trouble in the city is a reaction to religious and social change.

8. Initiation of new rites are attributed to Melampus and Epimenides. The introduction of the cult of *Dionysus*, especially the processions, is assigned to Melampus and a large scale reform is ascribed to Epimenides. One should notice that religious reforms are not perceived as the outcome of endogenous, slow growth but as a short process, a break with the local past. The initiator is an outsider with a supralocal name and the reform is described as activated particularly against women, who pursue ancient traditions. The need for reform arises from what is conceived to be a pollution but, as we saw in the case of Melampus and Epimenides, there seems to be little connection between the symptoms recorded and the cure administered. We may thus argue that tales about pollution may functioned as cover stories, composed to explain religious reforms, which no doubt involved conflicts and opposition.

I believe one more example from Greek literature will clarify the points I have attempted to make: Thales of Crete was invited to Sparta by Lycurgus, Sparta's legendary legislator. Lycurgus visited Crete and, having met Thales, he encouraged him to travel to Sparta. Plutarch, who recorded Lycurgus' journey to Crete, writes that although Thales appeared to be a lyric poet and essentially shielded himself behind this art, in reality he was one of the mightiest lawgivers. Thus Plutarch writes:

> For his odes were so many exhortations to obedience and harmony and their measured rhythms were permeated with ordered tranquil-

> lity, so that those who listened to them were insensibly softened in their dispositions, insomuch that they renounced the mutual hatreds which were so dominant at that time, and dwelt together in a common pursuit of what was high and noble.[28]

Plutarch concludes that Thales paved the way to Lycurgus and his disciplines. We should not be surprised to find that some of our sources claim that Thales actually cured a plague (τὴν νόσον παύσας) in Sparta, in fact Pausanias cautions his readers not to confuse Epimenides with Thales, both of whom were from Crete.[29]

Thales, then is depicted as a poet who paved the way to Lycurgus' reform by his comforting songs which encouraged the cooperation among the citizens of Sparta. This is not a simple story. Plutarch distinguishes between the figures of the poet and the legislator but states that Thales only looked like a poet but actually used his skills for promoting harmony and Lycurgus' legislation in the city. Thus, it seems that *Plutarch*'s and his sources' distinctions between the different areas of activity are far from simple or straightforward.

I would further note that the cooperation between Lycurgus and Thales is very much like that of Solon and Epimenides. Thales similar to Epimenides, fights a plague whose symptoms are great anxiety and tension, he purifies the city and works to promote harmony. It is possible that what we have here is a conventional model for the description of the institution of social and legal reforms, according to which a stranger, usually described as a seer or a poet, is invited by local figures to create the right "environment" for comprehensive reform. According to this model, there is a clear allocation of tasks between the foreign poet-seer-healer and the local legislator who actually initiates of the reform.

As already mentioned, some of our sources claim that Thales cured the plague that attacked Sparta. His main tools were his songs, but unfortunately we have no evidence as to their content. According to Plutarch, Thales' music worked magic in creating concord and harmony. I would like to suggest that we may learn about the nature of Thales' music from Greek stories about another very famous poet, Orpheus. Orpheus was believed to be one of the Argonauts and Apollonius Rhodius describes his special contribution to the well-known voyage. While at sea, the Argonauts became engaged in a

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[28] Plut. *Lyc.* 4.1–2. translation by B. Perrin (London: Loeb, 1914).

[29] Plut. *De Mus.* 1146B–C; Paus. 1.14.4; *Plutarch* also mentions Thales' name in relation to Epimenides. Plut. *Sol.* 12.6.

great conflict among themselves which threatened the continuation of the mission. In the crucial moment, Orpheus lifted his lyre and started to sing. He sang how the earth, the heaven and the sea once mingled together in one form, how after a deadly battle they were separated and how the stars and the moon and the paths of the sun were created. He sang how mountains rose and how the rivers with their nymphs came into being. He sang how first of all Ophion and Eurynome dominated the Olympus and how through strength of arms, one gave up his prerogative to *Cronus* and the other to Rhea, who ruled over the Titans, while Zeus was still a child. When Orpheus ended, according to the story, the Argonauts still bent forward with eagerness, intent on hearing the enchanting music. Not long afterwards, they mixed libations in honor of Zeus according to the customary. Tranquility thus returned to the "Argo".[30]

Special magical and healing powers are attributed to Orpheus' music. His singing relaxes its listeners and reminds them of their communal goal. Orpheus sings a *Theogonia*, a poem on the genealogy of the gods. He sing about the history of the gods, their conflicts and their relationships. Apart from Orpheus' voice and his playing, I would suggest that the *Theogonia* itself was believed to have healing and relaxing powers. Stories about the world of the gods, their discords, and the renewal of harmony are depicted as creating order (κόσμιον). It is possible therefore, that Thales' pacifying music was also *Theogonia*. Undoubtedly this was a different *Theogonia* from the one Apollunius Rhodius relates in the name of Orpheus, but despite the different names and emphasis, they were probably very much alike; a tale about the gods, their relationships, their conflicts and there solutions.

I believe that this analysis may lead to significant conclusions concerning one of the functions of stories about the gods in Greek Archaic society. It seems to me these stories had an important role in coping with social distress and in hammering out solutions for crises. Stories about the gods were one of the most important components of the men's practicing purification tool kit. As we all know the stories about the Greek gods are usually attributed to poets like Homer and Hesiod. However, we should remember that whether a figure is known to us as a "poet" or a "seer" or even a "legislator"

[30] Apoll. Rhod. *Argo*. 1.494–518.

depends on the vagaries of later literary traditions. In order to avoid this difficulty, we should focus on the cultural skills, powers and deeds ascribed to these figures and not on their "professional" titles alone. Such an analysis reveals that figures who functioned as what I would call "seers cum healers cum poets", like Thales and Epimenides, shaped and transformed traditions about the world of the gods.

Fortunately, we can reinforce this approach by a few fragments attributed to Epimenides. Some of which include the names of gods, their specific powers, and what seem like stories pertaining to their relationships.[31]

It is time to conclude and I would like to sum up my resolutions and mark some paths for future inquiry: My goal was to identify the figures who practiced purification in Archaic Greece, to analyze there cultural skills and to account for what seems to emerge as these figures more general role in the realities of the Archaic communities.

I have suggested it is best to view those individuals who practiced purification as "seers cum healers cum poets". They heal, they foretell the future and explain the past, and they shape and transform traditions about the gods. These individuals are depicted as foreigners, coming to the rescue at times of great distress. Stories which accompanies them, tell of their wanderings and their encounters with famous individuals. They cooperate and establish firm relationships with the Greek aristocracy. They are experts in the art of the spoken word and are perceived as having distinctive knowledge in religious reforms and unique relationships with the gods.

As this is a collective profile we can certainly find figures who practiced purification and were probably not poets. Therefore this collective profile does not perfectly fit many of those who practiced purification but it does describe a group of figures and a complex of skills which composed the cultural profiles of the men who practiced purification.

As I have suggested, itinerant seers were involved in the great cultural project of transforming traditions concerning the world of the gods and initiating religious practices in many areas in Archaic Greece. I believe that further research, which will reveal information about the relationships among these "seers cum healers cum

[31] *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* 68.B.19; 68.B.5; 68.B.2; 68.B.16. See also G.L. Huxley, *Greek Epic Poetry* (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), 80–84.

poets" themselves and between them and the Greek aristocracy, as well as about their involvement in the major enterprises and achievements of the Archaic period, will contribute to our understanding of the processes that shaped the multifold Greek religion, as we know it in later periods.

MELAMPOUS AND EPIMENIDES: TWO GREEK PARADIGMS OF THE TREATMENT OF MISTAKE

PHILIPPE BORGEAUD

One might think of rituals in general as being treatments of an original mistake. From this viewpoint the Promethean crisis, as developed by Hesiod both in his *Theogony* and in his *Works and Days*, and as it is prolonged by the Greek tradition transmitted in the *Library* of the Pseudo-Apollodorus, is particularly eloquent. Starting with a trick concerning the distribution of meat between mortals and immortals, in a world still deprived of an essential distinction between gods and human beings, a world still ignorant of transcendence, the story recounts stroke and counterstroke (stealing of fire, invention of womanhood, necessity of work, and setting, so to say, of the human condition), unto what could have been the end of the story: the flood, the cataclysm by which Zeus decides, apparently, to reduce humanity to the status of animality, if not to destroy it altogether. The result, thanks to a last trick of Prometheus, is nothing else than the establishment of religion (Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Library* I, 7,2, translated by Sir James Frazer): "Deucalion (the Greek Noah, son of Prometheus) by the advice of Prometheus constructed a chest, and having stored it with provisions he embarked in it with Pyrrha (his wife, daughter of Pandora). But Zeus by pouring heavy rain from heaven flooded the greater part of Greece, so that all men were destroyed, except a few who fled to the high mountains in the neighbourhood. It was then that the mountains in Thessaly parted, and that all the world outside the Isthmus and Peloponnese was overwhelmed. But Deucalion, floating in the chest over the sea for nine days and as many nights, drifted to Parnassus, and there, when the rain ceased, he landed and sacrificed to Zeus, the god of Escape (*ekbàs thúei Dìi phuxíoi*)." Starting from this first ritual action (a sacrifice, a *thusía*), everything becomes possible again: Zeus sends Hermes to Deucalion and allows him to choose what he wants, and he chooses to get men. At the bidding of Zeus he picked up stones and threw them over his head, and the stones Deucalion threw became men, and the stones which Pyrrha threw became women. Hence people were metaphorically called people (*laoì*) from

lãas, "a stone." The conclusion of this story, a new beginning of humanhood, means the establishment of a renewed relation, a new deal, between the gods and the humans. A relative transcendence has henceforth been established, between entities (gods and human beings) issued from the same origin (the Earth). Now that they are no longer *homotrapezoi*, "table-companions" of men, the gods have to be addressed through the mediation of a ritual: the first sacrifice repeats the initial meal uniting men and gods, at the same table, on the same spot, on earth, at Mekone. Indeed, the distribution of the sacrificial meal between the human and the divine will also precisely duplicate the tricky distribution inaugurated by Prometheus, at the beginning of our story. But the bones covered with fat will no longer be refused or rejected: they will henceforth burn on the altar (the *bomos*) for the gods above, who will receive the ascending smoke, while the eatable parts (*splanchna* and *hiera*, internal organs and meat) will become the object of a precise and complicated, but strictly human cooking and distribution, *on earth*. So, as it has been recognized by Jean Rudhardt, and by Jean-Pierre Vernant, the sacrifice (the *thusía*) accomplished for the first time by Deucalion, at the conclusion of the flood, reveals itself as being as much a correction of the initial failure as a commemoration of it.[1] The Greek story, setting such a configuration, uniting in the same act the memorization of the initial trauma and the healing of it, may be interpreted as anticipating what Freud will tell in *Totem and Taboo*. The totemic sacrifice, established at the issue of the crisis which led to the murder of the father, should at the same time be a commemoration and a reparation of the culpability. A curious mixture of guilt and adoration. But is there any guilt discernable, and where would the guilt be in our Greek story? This is the question that I would like to raise here, without pretending to answer it. It is an important question because the Promethean story could be looked at as being not only a paradigm for Freudian mythology, but already for a series of cultual (ritual) greek aitiologies: let us think of what happens during the *arkteía* (the "bear-festival") at Brauron and Munychia for example. A similar, comparable outline (the canvas) is repeatedly found in such origin-stories: what could be called

[1] Jean Rudhardt, "Les mythes grecs relatifs à l'instauration du sacrifice. Les rôles corrélatifs de Prométhée et de son fils Deucalion," *Museum Helveticum* 27 (1970): 1–15; cf. J.-P. Vernant, "A la table des hommes. Mythe de fondation du sacrifice chez Hésiode," in: *La cuisine du sacrifice en pays grec*, eds. M. Detienne et J.-P. Vernant (Paris: Gallimard, 1979), 37–132.

a crime, a fault, an error, a sad mistake, a misbehaviour or simply an inadvertent awkwardness is angering some local god. The angry god demands (requires) a reparation. The resulting ritual will perpetuate at the same time the memory of the primordial failure, and some sort of a trick by which the god will be satisfied, in spite of his enormous, exaggerated demands. At Munychia, according to the mythical explanation (the *aition* given by the myth), the sacrifice of a she-goat dressed as a girl will be the substitute for the sacrifice of a really human girl. While in the actual ritual (performed each year by the Athenian city), the *arkteia* will for some time transform the girls of Athens into small bears, thus taking the place of the mythical bear belonging to Artemis but killed in her sanctuary for having, a very long time ago, scratched the daughter of the local priest.[2]

Returning to Prometheus, we know that his trick intending to deceive Zeus does not escape the consciousness of Zeus. As Hesiod (*Theogony* 551) states very clearly, Zeus is not fooled by this trick. But he acts as if he were. And, anyway, he gets angry. The trick, the *dolos*, is treated by a superior *dolos*, the *dolos* of Zeus himself who, or whose *metis*, is already managing the result of the crisis: the instauration of a ritual relation between gods and men. Concerning Artemis, at Munychia, it is not explicitly stated that she is (or not) deceived by the ritual disguise of the she-goat taking the place of the girl. But this doubt is not relevant: the fact remains that the goddess agrees with the ritual performance of the *arkteia*. The rite, again, appears as an acceptation of a human trick. We are very close to the process by which, according to the exegesis of John Scheid, the Roman priest (under the mask of King Numa) is negotiating the extent to which divine demands can be received: the human sacrifice which Zeus requires becomes a normal sacrifice of substitution, which forces the god to accept the conditions of a life possible for a human political community.[3]

Such instances are suggesting that a good Greek way to look at rituals is to raise the question of the failure (of the original misbehaviour). What has gone wrong, once upon a time, explains the necessity of

[2] See A. Brelich, *Paides e Parthenoi* (Roma: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1969), 240–279; P. Brulé, *La fille d'Athènes. La religion des filles à Athènes à l'époque classique* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1987), 191–222; C. Sourvinou-Inwood, *Studies in Girls' Transitions. Aspects of the arkteia and age representation in Attic iconography* (Athens: Kardamitsa, 1988).

[3] J. Scheid, "Numa et Jupiter ou les dieux citoyens de Rome," *Archives de Science sociale des religions* 59 (1985): 41–53.

performing some strange, collective, periodical and local set of formalized actions. This may well be a secondary step: an afterthought. The aitiology may cover, or conceal, the simple fact of orthopraxis. Nevertheless, to find such an exegetic process at work, not only a propos a series of epichoric rituals, but at the core of panhellenic preoccupations, whenever and wherever the question (in Hesiod) is about *thusía*, that is to say the most central, fondamental constituent of Greek religious practice, this fact deserves our attention.

Let us remember that the *Iliad*, maybe the most ancient Greek text, entirely concerned by the anger of Achilleus, begins with the explanation of this anger. The entire narrative, the complete succession of actions, describes the outcome of a mistake, which is of ritual nature: the initial refusal by Agamemnon to accept the ransom proposed by a priest of Apollo for the surrender of his daughter, who was taken as booty. An epidemic is the result of this refusal. One could be tempted to imagine that, according to a Greek viewpoint, the entire *Iliad* appears as a ritual correction of this initial failure. This would be only partly true. Through the character of the priest (Chryses) Agamemnon is indeed insulting the god (Apollo), even if he remains blind to this fault of him. By his prayer (a secret prayer, delivered apart of any witness), Chryses launches the attack, an evident, explicit, self-revealing attack of the archer-god. In order to find a solution, that means in order to find the origin (the cause) of this evident anger of Apollo, the intervention of a specialist, a seer, is necessary: Calchas reveals the cause of the epidemy (the prayer pronounced by the priest), and the appropriate treatment in order to cure it: to give back the girl, and to offer a sacrifice to Apollo. The mistake concerning the god is accordingly rectified. The disease is cured. But a purely human misbehaviour (due again to the same arrogant blindness of Agamemnon) at once follows the first ritual mistake: desiring a compensation, Agamemnon takes hold of the booty belonging to Achilleus. The result is the anger of Achilleus. A human logic, a logic of honor and shame so to speak, prolonges a logic of divine power. The contrast, but also the interferences, between these two logics could be revealed by a question asked by an illustrious theorician of medicine. Celsus (*de med.* proem. 3) is wondering why Machaon and Podaleiros, the medicine-men of the *Iliad*, sons of Asclepios, do not intervene in the cure of the epidemy: are they only specialist of wounds and chirurgy, uninterested by diseases? This is not the point. With the apollonian arrows, diffusing death

in the Greek army, we are situated on a level clearly requiring the intervention of a seer, a diviner. Nevertheless, the human level which follows, in its turn, is, as we know, only partly human. Machaon and Podaleiros will have to cure wounds caused under the responsibility and even with the pleasure and the help of the gods. The real question here is the articulation of these two levels, and of these two logics.

The network of such interferences between visible and invisible, constitutes the background of the phenomenon which we are to discuss here: the representation of the role of the purifyer, in Greek thought.[4]

In order to approach this question, I will look at two examples, one situated in a purely mythical temporality (before the Trojan war), the other in what seems to be historical temporality, at Athens during the seventh century before common era.

First paradigm: Melampous, "Blackfoot"

Melampous is alluded to in the *Odyssey* (15, 225–246). He is presented as the ancestor of a lineage of diviners, among whom Amphiaraos is mentioned. The homeric poet gives to him the character of an itinerant, travelling three generations before the Trojan war. The first place we find him in is at Pylos, on the Messenian coast of Peloponnesus. He there enjoys the possession of a splendid house. In consequence of an unexplained quarrel with Neleus, king of Pylos, he is obliged to go to Phylake, in Thessaly (Northern Greece). There, during one entire year, he finds himself prisoner in chains, suffering because of the daughter of Neleus, and because of the *ate* put into his heart by the terrible Erinys. Then he comes back to Pylos, pushing before him a herd of lowing cattle. He makes Neleus pay for his misdeed. His wealth (the cattle) allows him to bring a bride into his brother's house. He then goes to Argos where he becomes king and gets married himself. In the *Nekuya* (*Od.* 11, 287), Odysseus encounters the phantom of Pero, daughter of Neleus. Before accepting to give her hand in marriage to any suitor, her father was requiring the magnificent cows watched upon by Iphicles, at Phylake. An

[4] On the notions of impurity, pollution, and defilement, see the excellent study by R. Parker, *Miasma. Pollution and purification in Early Greek Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).

excellent diviner, who is not named in this passage, was the only one to accept the challenge. He however remained prisoner of the cowherds for one year, until Iphicles liberated him, because (we are told) of his complete prediction.

Such is the Homeric canvas. The Greek tradition, witnessed at least since the hesiodic *Heoiai* (fr. 37 Merkelbach-West) and more clearly known since the beginning of the 5th century, will embroider the story according to this canvas. As a matter of fact such an allusive and schematic narrative would have remained obscure if it had not been taken in charge by the *Library* of the Pseudo-Apollodorus (I, 9,12) and by the scholiasts of the *Odyssey*, who are referring to a tradition going back to Pherecydes of Athens (3F33 Jacoby = schol. Hom. *Od.* 11, 287).

The story is about how to become a diviner-purifyer. It also explains the structure of the treatment such specialists propose.

Neleus, king of Pylos, has a daughter called Pero. She is so beautiful, that Neleus will only accept to give her in marriage to whoever will bring him the cows belonging to Phylakos, cows which are watched upon by formidable guardians. All the suitors have renounced except Bias, the brother of Melampous. Bias persuades Melampous to do the task for him. Being a seer, Melampous knows he will be captured and emprisoned for one year. He nevertheless goes to the northern regions, in search of these cows. As anticipated, he is captured by the cowherds and the guardians. He ends up in chains and imprisoned. Since nobody is curious of his identity, nobody even asks him why he tried to steal the cows. In his prison, he meets two companions, a man and a woman, who are both slaves. The man is behaving normally towards him, according to the status of a slave. The woman treats him badly. As his year of imprisonment draws to a close, Melampous hears the discussion of two woodworms above him, saying to one other that they were about to succeed in gnawing through the main beam in the ceiling. Having listened attentively, Melampous called his two servitors, and asked them to carry his bed and himself outside, the man taking the bed on the side of his head, the woman taking it on the side of his feet. At the exact moment when they brought him outside of the cell, the ceiling collapsed, killing the female servant, who had treated him badly. The male servant, impressed by this kind of miracle, reports the events to the king Phylakos, who in turn reports it to Iphiklos. The two of them went to Melampous, asking if he was a *mantis* (a seer).

The answer being yes, they promise to give the sought-for cattle to Melampous, if he can cure Iphiklos' inability to beget children.[5]

Melampous engages in this task by sacrificing an ox (or a cow: *boûn*) to Zeus, while distributing portions of the sacrificial meal to the birds, all of them. The birds (whose language he understands) are here taking the position of the human community which is normally organizing a sacrifice. This strange cultual community beeing thus called and tied together, Melampous asks if one of the birds knows the means by which Iphiklos could become able to have children. They do not know, but they know that the vulture does know, the *aigupiós*, who is the only bird not to have come to the sacrifice. Accordingly they call the vulture. The vulture begins by revealing the cause of the sterility. Let us stress that the question explicitly asked by Melampous was how to cure, not what was the cause of the illness; such an answer supposes that the treatment can be nothing else than a sort of commentary on, or even reenactment of the cause. The reason of the *ápaidos sporâs* (childless semen) according to the narrative given by the vulture is the following: when Iphiklos was still very small (*neognòn ónta*), his father Phylakos chased him with a knife (something like a sacrificial knife: a *máchaira*), because he had seen the child doing something silly (*átopon*). Failing to catch the child, he fixed the *máchaira* in a wild and thorny pear tree (*eís tina ácherdon*). The bark grew over the *máchaira*. Because of his fear, Iphiklos became incapable of begetting children. The vulture indicates how to find and to bring back the *máchaira* fixed in the wild pear tree; then to scrape the rust (*iós*, meaning also poison), mix the rust with wine, and let Iphiklos drink this mixture (or concoction) for ten days. In this way he would have children. Melampous did what the vulture told him. And a child (Podarkes) was born to Iphiklos. Iphiklos handed over the cows to Melampous, who brought them to Neleus, as the dowry for Pero. He then gave Pero to his brother Bias.

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[5] James Redfield encouraged me to think that the way by which Melampous is recognized as being a diviner (in prison, through reports made by one of two companions) is strangely close to the way Joseph, in *Genesis* 40–41, is recognized as a good interpreter of dreams. If this is not a coincidence, it could be the result of a common, Near-Eastern, background concerning this category of itinerant specialists: see W. Burkert, "Craft Versus Sect: The Problem of Orphics and Pythagoreans", in: *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition*, vol. 3, *Self-Definition in the Graeco-Roman World*, eds. Ben F. Meyer and E.P. Sanders, London, 1982, 1–22 (notes pp. 183–189); W. Burkert, *The Orientalizing Revolution. Near Eastern Influence on Greek Culture in the Early Archaic Age* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992).

This is the version attributed to Pherecydes by the scholiast of the *Odyssey*. Apollodorus substantially relates the same story, but gives some "interesting additions that may be early."[6] Concerning in particular the incident that frightened Iphiklos, Apollodorus gives indeed a slightly different account: "Melampous learned from the vulture that once, when Phylacus was gelding (castrating) rams, he laid down the knife, still bloody, beside Iphiclus, and that when the child was frightened and ran away, he stuck the knife in the sacred tree (*katà tês hierâs druòs autèn épexe*), and the bark encompassed the knife and hid it (transl. Frazer)." A scholiast to Theocritus (III, 43c, ed. Wendel) gives an even more explicit version: the child Iphiklos is witnessing the castration of some domestic animals. His father wished to frighten him, and threw the knife, in order to fix it into a nearby tree. The knife, passing by, touched the sexual organs of the boy (*sunébe epenegkeîn autèn toîs moríois toû paidós*).

One last interesting variant (scholiast to the *Odyssey* 11, 290) tells that the knife is used for the castration, as in Apollodorus and in the scholia to Theocritus, but the treatment becomes a sacrifice adressed to the gods made angry by the castration. I will return soon to this idea of a sacrifice, as well as to the qualification of the tree (hiding the knife) as sacred (*hieros*). It will lead us, I think, towards what would be a contextually Greek interpretation of this healing process.

Walter Burkert alludes (in a few words) to this story in his *Creation of the Sacred.*[7] As he writes:

> This may well be the first—we can say classical—case of Freudian psychoanalysis: discovering the hidden trauma from the patient's youth, which of course has to do with the father and castration phobia, and curing it by gradual familiarization with the frightening object of old. The treatment looks medical rather than religious in this case, but only the diviner can direct it. The sequence is the same (as in religious treatments of present sufferings): disaster, the seer, the hidden cause, and the corresponding cure. Has psychoanalysis become so acceptable and effective in our century just because it is moving on old and beaten tracks? In this case, as in the modern version, the fault revealed by the medicine man is not the patient's but the parent's; they have to pay for it.

[6] T. Gantz, *Early Greek Myth. A Guide to Literary and Artistic Sources* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1993), 187.

[7] W. Burkert, *Creation of the Sacred. Tracks of Biology in Early Religions* (Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard University Press, 1996), 111–112.

The cause of the illness of Iphiklos (impotence or sterility, according to divergent traditions) is due to the behaviour of his father, a king. This threatening behaviour (manipulation of a knife in presence of the child) occurs during a normal, even banal, stock-farming activity: the castration of males in the herd. This frightening connotation of an apparently banal action is reinforced by the designation of the knife as *máchaira*, locating it in the symbolical region of a bloody sacrifice. The consequence, the result of this akward paternal and royal behaviour, is practically the interruption of the royal lineage. The line of filiation, and therefore the transmission of the power, is jeopardized. But where is the misbehaviour precisely located? What is the real mistake? Insisting on what could look like a detail, the story itself designates an interpretation, an interpretation which points not in the same direction as the Freudian one, but which does not contradict it either: the knife is hidden in the bark of a sacred tree, which is more precisely a wild pear-tree. The king has wounded a sacred tree. This kind of tree is found in many Greek stories, where it appears as beneficient. I will especially insist on two instances, found in a territory wandered through by Melampous: in Argolid, the first king nourished the survivors of the flood from the fruits of a wild pear-tree.[8] In Argolid again, the first cultual image of the goddess Hera has been carved in the wood of this same tree.[9] The wild pear-tree is consecrated to Hera, goddess of marriage.

The illness cured by Melampous is not a purely individual suffering: it has collective, social, and political consequences. Its origin, again, is not a purely human behaviour. The unconscious mistake, with its sacrificial connotation, is not only frightening and traumatizing a child, it is, at the same time, hurting a supernatural power directly concerned with marriage.

Practicing at the same time the art of divination, the sacrifice and the use of potions or concoctions, Melampous appears in this story to be in search of a wife for his brother: the whole story is thus situated under the sign of Hera, of marriage. Both divinatory and medical, the ritual organized around Iphiklos results in the obtaining of a bride-price (the cows). It will make possible the marriage of a king's daughter at Pylos, as well as the continuation of an other royal descent, in Thessaly.

[8] Plutarchus, *Greek Questions* 51 (= *Moralia* 303 A).
[9] Pausanias II, 17,5.

Mythology loves to amplify the stories by constantly interweaving them, thus organizing a large web of echoes and assonances. Having brought the cows and married his brother, Melampous leaves Pylos and goes to Argolid, in order to get a wife and to himself become king. The story henceforth is no more concerned with the sterility of a royal child, but with royal girls insulting the image, made from wild pear-tree, of the goddess Hera: they boast that the house of their father, the king Proitos, is more magnificent than the famous sanctuary of Hera. Seized with madness, they spring and rush towards the mountains of Arcadia, imagining that they are cows. Once more acting as both priest and medecine-man, Melampous receives the task to find these cows, and to bring them back to the city, and to the marriage. He undertakes this task with the promise of a good salary.

Thoughtlessness of youth, the mistake of the Proitids insulting Hera has lasting and collective consequences. Their illness extends over ten years, and contaminates the entire femine population of Argos. Proitos promised to give a part of his kingdom, and one of his daughters, to whomever would cure this epidemy.

The madness of the Proitids is most often attributed to Hera. Some authors, attentive to the Menadic quality of their roaming in the mountains, present the Proitids as being opponent to the Dionysiac cult. Melampous, according to Herodotus, is very close to Dionysos, whose cult he introduces into Greece. But he is also, according to Greek tradition, a friend of Apollo. I will not evoke, in this short paper, the problems resulting of such interferences. I will concentrate on the misbehaviour committed against Hera by girls in age to get married. In his *Choeurs de jeunes filles*, Claude Calame stresses the fact that it would be time for them, ritually, to leave the artemisian sphere, or the territory of premarriage, in order to get married.[10] By insulting the xoanon of Hera, they are forced back into the territory of Artemis, goddess of wilderness. In Bacchylides, they are cured by Proitos himself, who offers to Artemis twenty red cattles for interceding with Hera. The point here, is precisely the transition from girl to married woman. The misbehaviour of the Proitids against Hera compromises this delicate transition from one age to another. According to the hesiodic *Ehoiai* (Hesiod fr. 133 Merkelbach-West) the beautiful girls are immediately transformed into ugly, sick, aged women:

[10] C. Calame, *Les choeurs de jeunes filles en Grèce archaïque I. Morphologie, fonction religieuse et sociale* (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo & Bizzarri, 1977), 214–220.

the angered deity pours an awfully itching substance on their head. This substance spreads over their entire skin, giving it the color of wheaten flour. Their hair falls and they become bald. According to Pausanias, they take refuge in a cave of Arcadia. Their madness is sometimes assimilating them to maenads, sometimes alluding to transformations (or illusions) specifically created by Hera. They think they are cows, like Io, an other ennemy of Hera. There is also a question of sexual troubles. The modern interprets have tried, in vain, to identify this suffering and to give it a scientific name: nymphomania, hysteria, leprosy?

The cure proposed by Melampous is composed as much from medicine (*phármaka*) as from rites of purification. This duality is the important point. The most developed version of the treatment is given by the Pseudo-Apollodorus (II, 2,2, translated by Frazer):

> Taking with him the most stalwart of the young men, he chased (*sunedioxe*) the women in a bevy from the mountains to Sicyon with shouts and a sort of frenzied dance. In the pursuit Iphinoe, the eldest of the daughters, expired; but the others were lucky enough to be purified and so to recover their wits. Proetus gave them in marriage to Melampous and Bias, and afterwards begat a son, Megapenthes.

The healing ritual takes the appearence of a hunting expedition, intended to bring back the maddened herd towards humanity and marriage. In the same way as with Iphiklos, the cure corresponds precisely to a reversed reenactment of the origin of the disease: that is to say a mistake affecting the normal transition from the territories of Artemis to the domain of Hera.

Second paradigm and conclusion: Epimenides

Concerning this legendary figure, the Athenian memory is testified, for us, mainly by the beginning of the aristotelian *Constitution of Athens* (2,1; 4,1–5,2), and by the *Life of Solon* (12,1) of Plutarchus. These texts put into relationship the arrival in Athens of a Cretan purificator, invited by the Polis, with a political and religious defilement whose consequences are presented alternatively under two modes, which are different, but difficult (if not impossible) to distinguish: a *loimós* (a pestilence, an epidemic affecting both the earth and the humanity), and a *stásis*, a political trouble, resulting in a civil war. In the second century A.D., Maximus of Tyr (c. 38) summarizes this visit of Epimenides

with these words: "A Cretan named Epimenides came to Athens. Thanks to his knowledge of divine things, he was able to save the Athenian city devastated both by an epidemic (*loimós*) and by a civil war (*stásis*)." Confronted with a state of emergency, the suffering city calls upon the help of a foreigner, a man coming from abroad, from Crete, who is both a diviner and a specialist of purifications. He is invited for a precise task, and offered a salary (which he will refuses at the end, beeing contented with a bough taken from the sacred olive-tree of the Acropolis). Epimenides belongs to the category of the archaic *demiourgoi*, those itinerant specialists (or technicians) hired by the *demos* because of a specific, and collectively useful, know-how. He enters a category where he meets other specialists: architects, physicians, scribes, or poets.

The origin of the defilement, of the *miasma*, resulting in the *loimos*, is a collective murder, commited against the followers of a young aristocrat. In a period of political dissentions, Cylon and his young partisans attempted a coup d'état. They laid hold of the Acropolis, taking advantage of the occasion given by a religious feast attracting the population to the countryside. They failed in this attempt. Besieged, prisoners of the Acropolis, starving to death, they took refuge at the altar of Athena, as suppliants. They received the promise of a safe retreat. But, notwithstanding their status of suppliant and this promise, they were ignominiously slaughtered. Some awful details are indelibly kept in the Athenian memory: the suppliants are said to have tied a thread to the image of the Goddess, and they are said to have left the Acropolis with this thread of wool in their hands. But the thread broke off when they were passing (near the Areopagus) by the sanctuary of the Semnai (the Erinyes). They were slaughtered there, as they were taking refuge, this time, at the altar of those venerable, primordial, goddesses of the earth and of justice.

The tradition has it that the *loimós* afflicted the entire *polis*, despite the fact that the authors of the murder were judged and expulsed, sent into exile. The already dead ones among them had their bones exhumed and thrown away, outside the territory of the city. We owe to Diogenes Laertius (I, 110) the most precise narrative of the mission accomplished by Epimenides, in this occasion. The need of a purifyer is revealed by the oracle of Delphi. An embassy is sent to Crete, in order to search for and to bring back Epimenides. As soon as he arrives in Attika, Epimenides takes some black sheep and some white sheep with him. With this composite herd, he goes to the Areopagus,

in the precise region of the sanctuary of the *Semnai*, the original spot of the *miasma* diffusing through the city, its "épicentre" according to the fortunate formule of Jean-Louis Durant.[11] From there, the sheep are freed, to go wherever they want. The assistants of Epimenides each follow one sheep, with the mission of sacrificing the animal at the exact spot where it would lie down, adressing this sacrifice to the anonymous deity present on this spot. This procedure results in a new definition, a redefinition of the cultual space, with a foundation (or a refoundation, in the case of the Erinyes) of sanctuaries. The apparently random itineraries of the sheep reshape the legitimation and efficacity of sacrificial processions, for the city, for the attic territory. A new religious beginning, after the momentanous dead-end. Epimenides is thus credited to have been a refounder of ritual practice.

As Jean-Louis Durand has shown, Epimenides is litteraly remapping the cultual, sacrificial space of the city. This remapping is not directly related to the event, to the crime which is at the origin of the civic suffering. The commemoration of the initial misbehaviour is not at stake here. I think that the remapping of the sacrificial space has nevertheless to be indirectly related to an other story concerning Epimenides: the famous tradition telling how he became a diviner (Diogenes Laertius I, 109). It is the story of the long sleep, a fabulous story according to which he lost some sheep when he was a shepherd in Crete. Searching for his sheep, he fell asleep in a cave at noon (the dangerous hour), and awoke only after 40, or even 57 years. Not realizing what had happened to him, unconscious of the time which had gone by, he continued to search for the lost sheep. He again found himself in the fields. He however felt disorientated: the space had been transformed; he did not recognize the new distribution of the cultivated land. Even the humans were different. It is told that at the issue of this experience he became a seer.

With our second paradigm, Epimenides, supposed by Greek historians to have been a friend of Solon, we are entering history, or something between myth and history. The model here remains marvellous, but at the core of the story, the procedure by which Epimenides purifies the city of Athens has to be undertaken without the evident supernatural knowledges of a Melampous. Epimenides behaves exactly like a real purifyer would have behaved. He does not need

[11] "Formules attiques du fonder", in: *Tracés de fondation*, ed. M. Detienne (Louvain-Paris: Peeters, Bibliothèque de l'EHE, Sciences religieuses, vol. 93, 1990), 271–287.

to understand the language of animals. The story stresses the procedure by which he will be able to cure the collective suffering. This procedure consists in localizing the invisible network of powers affected by the *miasma*, much more than in discovering the supernatural means by which he could become conscious of things hidden to the common memory. The crime which is at the origin of the suffering is known by all. The idea is not to find the crime out, but only to cure its consequences. In this sense, the correlation between the original trauma and the cure will necessarily become less visible than in the example of Melampous. But at the same time, the ritual of purification still remains concerned by a hidden and unexpected problem which is the remaining, perduring defilement existing alongside (and in spite of) its evident origin. The way by which Epimenides locates the sanctuaries and the unknown gods affected by the well-known civic crime, therefore corresponds to the way by which Melampous locates and designates the sacred wild pear-tree wounded by the knife of Phylakos rather than simply insisting on the castration threat.

Thus, our two paradigms illustrate one same thematic: how to treat a collective suffering overflowing the limits recognizable by simple anamnesis.[12]

[12] The author wishes to thank his student, Simona Ferrar, for her assistance in bringing this text into readable english.

PURIFICATION *IN ABSENTIA*: ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF ZOROASTRIAN RITUAL PRACTICE[1]

ALBERT DE JONG

1. *Introduction*

Purification rituals have been a prominent part of Zoroastrian religious life throughout its history.[2] These rituals include daily rituals, designed and intended for the preservation and restoration of purity after all acts involving impure substances, and rituals that are performed irregularly and were designed for special circumstances. Among the former category, for instance, are the rituals framing the act of urinating, which consist of digging a hole in the ground, reciting the first part of the prescribed texts (three paces removed from the place), squatting to pass water, stepping away (again three paces), reciting the second part of the prescribed texts and washing the hands with the urine of a bull (*gōmēz* or *pādyāb*) and water. These, and rituals in similar circumstances, had a double function: they protected the

[1] The investigations were supported by the Foundation for Research in Philosophy and Theology (SFT), which is subsidized by the Netherlands Organization for the Advancement of Research (NWO). Abbreviations used are: Dd. = *Dādestān ī Dēnīg*; Dk(M). = *Dēnkard* (ed. Madan); *PhlVd.* = Pahlavi Vendīdād; *REA* = *Riwāyat ī Ēmēd ī Ašawahištān*; *SDB* = *Ṣad dar-e bondaheš*; *SDN* = *Ṣad dar-e naṯr*; *Vd.* = *Vendīdād*; YF = *Mādayān ī Yōšt ī Frīyān*; *Yt.* = *Yašt*.

[2] For introductions to the subject, cf. M. Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism I: The Early Period* (= *HZ* I), Leiden 1975, 294–324; J.K. Choksy, *Purity and Pollution in Zoroastrianism. Triumph over Evil*, Austin 1989. The contemporary Parsi ritual practice is described in J.J. Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees*, Bombay 1922, 86–177; the contemporary Irani practice is described by M. Boyce, *A Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism*, Oxford 1977 (Lanham 1989²), 92–138. Reflections of Zoroastrian purity rules in classical literature are discussed in A. de Jong, *Traditions of the Magi. Zoroastrianism in Greek and Latin Literature* (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 133), Leiden 1997, 414–420. The most important publications from a theoretical perspective are A.V. Williams, "The Body and the Boundaries of Zoroastrian Spirituality", *Religion* 19 (1989), 227–239; *id.*, "Zoroastrian and Judaic Purity Laws. Reflections on the Viability of a Sociological Interpretation", in S. Shaked & A. Netzer (eds.), *Irano-Judaica III. Studies Relating to Jewish Contacts with Persian Culture throughout the Ages*, Jerusalem 1994, 72–89; *id.*, "Zoroastrianism and the Body", in S. Coakley (ed.), *Religion and the Body*, Cambridge 1997, 155–166. For a comparative perspective, cf. S. Soroudi, "The Concept of Jewish Impurity and its Reflection in Persian and Judeo-Persian Traditions", in: Shaked & Netzer (eds.), *Irano-Judaica III*, 142–170.

person from loss of purity and they protected the person's surroundings from being defiled, by neutralizing the evil from which the impure substances derive their danger. The three main elements of these rituals are: 1) marking off a limited area to prevent the spread of pollution; 2) reciting prescribed prayers to withstand the powers of evil who always accompany pollution; and 3) applying purifying substances to the body or to the objects that require purification, in order to both physically cleanse them and to neutralize the impurity.

These three elements are also present in purification rituals of the second category, those designed to eliminate more serious, irregularly occurring, pollution. For seriously polluted items (mainly the clothes worn by a polluted person), a ritual known as "six months" was prescribed.[3] For polluted men and women the main purification ritual was the *barašnūm ī nō šab*, the "*barašnūm* of nine nights." This is the most powerful and most important purification ritual, the only ritual that is capable of removing the most serious pollution, that contracted through contact with dead matter (*nasā*).[4] It is this ritual, or rather a development in this ritual, that is the focus of the present article. The main structure of the ritual and of its early interpretations presuppose the presence of the actual candidate, in order to remove his/her pollution and assure his/her re-integration into the community through an elaborate purification ceremony. At an unknown point in time, however, the ritual came to be performed vicariously: instead of cleansing the body that actually carried the impurity, someone else's body could be cleansed and so restore the purity of a body that had never been physically purified. This vicarious *barašnūm* was mainly undergone for the purification of the soul of a deceased relative and this adds yet another new element to the ritual: not only does the vicarious *barašnūm* transcend the individuality of living persons, by purifying one person through another, it also transcends the gap between the living and the dead, provided the right links have been established. It is not too difficult to imagine the reasons for this development: the ritual is physically exacting and requires a ten day period of isolation; people who are seriously ill

[3] The ritual is usually referred to by its Avestan name *xšuuaš* [*mâŋhó*] (e.g. *REA* 16; *PhlVd.* 9.32add.). The foundation text for this ritual is *Vd.* 7.15. It consists of ablutions and prayers, together with a period of exposure (to the sun) of six months.

[4] For a description of the ritual, cf. Choksy, *Purity and Pollution*, 23-52 (with references); Modi, *Religious Ceremonies*, 102-157.

or who have to attend their farms or businesses must have found it extremely difficult to make themselves available for the ritual. Likewise, the care of the souls of deceased relatives has contributed to the development of undergoing the purification for the sake of the soul of a loved one.[5] These practical motivations, however, cannot explain how the ritual by proxy was rationalised; it is this question that we shall try to discuss. In order to do that, we must first discuss some methodological problems.

The nature of the written sources for Zoroastrianism is such that it is impossible to write a history of that faith similar to histories of, for example, Christianity, Buddhism or Islam.[6] In the ancient and early medieval periods, Zoroastrianism was an oral religious tradition. Even in periods when Iranians were well acquainted with the art of writing and used writing for administrative and economic purposes, religious traditions and, it seems, literature were not written down. This changed gradually in the Sasanian period, when repeated attempts were made to collect and write down the sacred traditions, but the majority of texts were written down only in the Islamic period, particularly in the ninth and tenth centuries C.E. The texts that were written down from the late Sasanian period up to the tenth century are in two languages, Avestan and Pahlavi. The texts in Avestan are usually referred to as the "sacred books" of the Zoroastrians and for the majority of these texts, this is an apt description: they are the foundation texts of Zoroastrianism and all other texts invoke their authority. The *Avesta* cannot be dated in its entirety, nor can any of its constituent components be dated with confidence. It is generally assumed, for sound linguistic and historical reasons, that its most ancient layer (written in a separate dialect called *Gathic* or *Old Avestan*) is to be dated around 1000 B.C.E. The vast majority of texts, however, is written in *Late Avestan*; linguistic methods for the dating of these texts are notoriously unreliable, but it is generally thought that Avestan texts cannot have been composed later than 300 B.C.E., because by then Avestan had become a dead language for the majority of (and possibly all) Zoroastrians.[7]

[5] Boyce, *HZ* I, 317–319.

[6] For an overview of the problems, cf. De Jong, *Traditions of the Magi*, 39–75.

[7] P.G. Kreyenbroek, "The Zoroastrian Tradition from an Oralist's Point of View", *K.R. Cama Oriental Institute Second International Congress Proceedings*, Bombay 1996, 221–237.

The texts in Pahlavi reflect the transmission of Zoroastrian theology and lore in the vernacular, at least for the Zoroastrians of Western Iran. They consist of an exegetical translation of (parts of) the Avesta (*Zand*), which in all likelihood grew together with the tradition and preserves early layers of scriptural exegesis, and a large collection of theological works. Although most scholars agree that among these texts there are many which contain or reflect older traditions, it is undeniable that these texts were not just committed to writing in the ninth century, but were (severely) edited. They thus reflect, first and foremost, the situation of Zoroastrianism in the ninth century; one may attempt to extract from them information on Zoroastrianism in earlier periods, but such an attempt carries with it an element of speculation.[8]

After the tenth century, most Zoroastrian literature was written in Persian. Persian Zoroastrian literature mainly covers the period from the 15th to the 18th centuries. Some Persian Zoroastrian texts, most notably the two prose *Sad dar* texts and the *Zarātuštnāmeh* are a few to several centuries older.[9] Here again we have a gap of several centuries in our documentation, from the 10th to the 15th century, at least for the theological Zoroastrian texts.

All this is well known to specialists and most students of Zoroastrianism have fully assimilated the severe restrictions placed on their efforts at reconstructing the history of that faith by the sources. For non-specialists, the situation may require an illustration. If we attempt to research the history of the *barašnūm*, for instance, we have the following important sources: 1) the *Vendīdād*, an undatable text, but certainly not later than 300 B.C.E.; 2) the long gloss to *Pahlavi Vendīdād* 9.32,[10] reflecting presumably the Sasanian tradition; 3) the *Epistles of Mānuščihr*, a collection of three letters from the late ninth century, discussing (and rejecting) a suggested simplification of the *barašnūm*;[11] 4) scattered references in other Pahlavi texts, mainly from

[8] This subject is discussed at length by S. Shaked, *Dualism in Transformation. Varieties of Religion in Sasanian Iran*, London 1994.

[9] For the date of the *Sad dar*, cf. below; for the date of the *Zarātuštnāmeh*, cf. F. de Blois, *Persian Literature. A Bio-Bibliographical Survey V.1 (Poetry to ca. A.D. 1100)*, London 1992, 171–176 (early eleventh century C.E.).

[10] For this text, cf. E.W. West, *Pahlavi Texts II: The Dādistān-ī Dīnīk and the Epistles of Mānūśkīhar* (Sacred Books of the East 18), Oxford 1882 (many reprints), 446–452; B.T. Anklesaria, *Pahlavi Vendīdād*, Bombay 1949, 242–247.

[11] Translated in full by West, *Pahlavi Texts II*, 279–366. This is probably the most

the tenth century (*Šāyest nē-Šāyest; Pahlavi Rivāyat of Ādur-Farnbāg; Rivāyat ī Ēmēd ī Ašawahištān* etc.); 5) references to the ritual in the *Sad dar* texts (13th–14th c.?); 6) references to the ritual in the *Persian Rivāyats* (15th–18th c.);[12] 7) descriptions of the ritual from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Between these various sources, there are considerable periods of silence. These may occasionally be relieved by references to the ritual in non-Zoroastrian sources, as in the sixth-century *Histories* of Agathias (for which, see below). Sometimes, archaeology or art history may have preserved some information (not in the case of the *barašnūm*). Having collected all these sources, we then proceed to an inventory of their content. The references in Pahlavi and Persian Zoroastrian literature mainly consist of special cases discussed by religious authorities: if, for instance, it starts to rain during the ritual, what should be done? If the woman undergoing the ritual discovers that her menstruation has started, what should she do? If someone has a sore in his mouth and swallows some blood together with his food, should he undergo the *barašnūm*?

Having collected all texts and having processed all cases, it is tempting to put them in a continuing historical narrative. Here we face the following problem: if we find a novel idea in one of the sources, should we attribute it to the approximate period of the source or could it be a much earlier idea that only came to be recorded in that period? There is no satisfactory solution to that problem, but there are some rules which we may choose to apply. The volume of texts on the *barašnūm* is such that it is unlikely that an idea that is encountered for the first time in the Persian Zoroastrian texts can be assumed to have been current in the time of the *Vendīdād*. As a rule of thumb, therefore, we may suggest that if a certain aspect of the *barašnūm* is not evident from the *Vendīdād* or from Pahlavi literature, it is unlikely to have been part of pre-Islamic Zoroastrianism. It may be worthwile, moreover, to attempt to embed such novel ideas first within the approximate period in which they make their first appearance. If we do that, we must make a fundamental distinction between

difficult of all Pahlavi texts; West's translation aptly conveys its main arguments, but is otherwise very unreliable.

[12] Especially important in this respect is the last of the great *Rivāyats*, the *Itholer*, half of which is devoted to the *barašnūm*: cf. M. Vitalone, *The Persian Revāyat "Itholer." Zoroastrian Rituals in the Eighteenth Century* (Istituto Universitario Orientale, Dipartimento di studi Asatici, Series Minor 49), Napoli 1996.

the Pahlavi texts and the Persian texts. The former are clearly part of the oral period of Zoroastrian history and literature, the latter are clearly part of its written period. In Pahlavi texts, therefore, particularly in translations of the Avesta, we can expect to find earlier layers of Zoroastrian ideas or rituals; this option seems to be excluded for most Persian texts.

Rituals carry and convey many associations and interpretations. There is a diachronic aspect to this diversity in the sense that a ritual and its interpretation develop throughout the history of its performance and the reflections on its importance. There is also a synchronic layering: priestly views of the ritual may be radically different from lay views; male views may differ from female views; mainstream ideas may differ from esoteric interpretations etc. As a final *caveat* it is important to notice that the vast majority of Zoroastrian literature enables us to see the priestly views only. This concerns primarily the interpretation of the ritual, for there are no differences in the actual performance of the ritual. But in the main, we only know what priests felt lay Zoroastrians should (not) do or believe and this imposes yet another restriction on our interpretative strategies: theologians and other priestly authorities are wont to systematize and spiritualize aspects of their trade which among lay members of the faith may have carried highly diverse and less spiritual connotations.

This lengthy introduction was necessary, I feel, to discuss the most recent interpretation of the *barašnūm*. In a monograph devoted mainly to this subject, Jamsheed K. Choksy has argued that the *barašnūm* was developed by Zoroastrian priests "to ensure ritual purity of both the body and the soul," that the ritual, in other words, was a spiritual as well as a bodily purification.[13] In order to strengthen his case for this interpretation, he has developed a general interpretation of Zoroastrianism through the ages, according to which theology and ritual are both vehicles of "meaning" and are permanently fused in order to remind believers of where they stand in the battle against evil. Following the (possible) symbolic meanings of all elements in the ritual, he places them in a structure which is based on two pillars: Zoroastrian cosmogony and cosmology on the one hand and the links between spiritual (*mēnōg*) and material (*gētīg*) realities on the

[13] Choksy, *Purity and Pollution*, 23.

other.[14] The unifying factor in this code of symbols is the concept of "homologies," the idea that

> Microcosm is viewed [. . .] as an alloform of the macrocosm, matter as an alloform of spirit, and humanity as a corporeal alloform of the divine. Because of such alloformic association in meaning, through homology and analogy, Zoroastrians perceive no disjunction between the tangible activities of rituals and the symbolic meanings of these activities, just as they see no dichotomy between the material and the spiritual states. As a result of this cosmic interconnection ultimately based on meaning, the importance of each Zoroastrian rite lies in a fusion of actions, liturgies, and beliefs with religious symbols.[15]

In other words, every religious act and every religious utterance of a Zoroastrian in one way or another reflects an identical "grammar" of that religion, which can best be reconstructed in terms of its views of cosmic history (cosmogony and eschatology and the cosmology based on these).

The main objection to this approach is the fact that it is quintessentially unhistorical. By stating explicitly that "The specific pattern described by the purification rituals is timeless,"[16] Choksy suggests that in all manifestations and interpretations of the ritual, an identical basic pattern of "meaning" can be perceived. A subsidiary consequence of this approach is that it elevates a specific interpretation of Zoroastrianism, based on modern perceptions of that faith and on the lacunary evidence for its earlier stages, to a normative model for that religion. This model, of course, is both priestly and "orthodox," in the sense that it is based on what emerged as the *communis opinio* of Zoroastrian priests in the ninth and tenth centuries C.E.[17]

There is some room, I believe, to question this approach. One of its main elements, the idea that the *barašnūm* was intended to purify

[14] For the latter subject, cf. S. Shaked, "The Notions *mēnōg* and *gētīg* in the Pahlavi Texts and their Relation to Eschatology", *Acta Orientalia* 33 (1971), 59–107.

[15] Choksy, *Purity and Pollution*, 111.

[16] Choksy, *Purity and Pollution*, 137.

[17] We know, for instance, that a great variety of cosmogonical and eschatological ideas existed in Sasanian Zoroastrianism (S. Shaked, "The Myth of Zurvan. Cosmogony and Eschatology" in: I. Gruenwald, S. Shaked & G.G. Stroumsa (eds.), *Messiah and Christos. Studies in the Jewish Origins of Christianity* (Fs. D. Flusser; Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum 32), Tübingen 1992, 219–240; De Jong, *Traditions of the Magi*, 57–63). There can be no doubt that Zoroastrians who believed in these alternative cosmogonies also underwent the *barašnūm*, but for them, its symbolism may have been totally different.

the soul, is attested only in ninth-century highly complex priestly sources, and even in those, it is not the most prominent interpretation. The stress rather seems to be on two different aspects: the physical removal of the pollution and the integration of the purified person into the society of his/her co-religionists. In order to shed some more light on these matters, we will focus on an unusual development in the performance of the *barašnūm* and attempt to place this development in the context of similar developments in post-Sasanian Zoroastrianism. First, we shall have a look at the ritual itself and at its early interpretations; then, the evidence for the vicarious *barašnūm* will be discussed and the main problem in its interpretation will be outlined. In order to tackle this problem, we shall look at a comparable case (the confession of sins) and then focus on the synchronic evidence from the *Ṣad dar* texts only. This, it is hoped, will provide us with enough background material to place the vicarious *barašnūm* in the context of the development of the Zoroastrian tradition.

2. *The* barašnūm ī nō šab (barašnūm *of nine nights*): *a description of the ritual*[18]

The *barašnūm* (the name is derived from Avestan *barəšnu-*, "top") is the most elaborate and most powerful Zoroastrian purification ritual. It takes place in a specifically marked off area, the *barašnūm-gāh*. This *barašnūm-gāh* must be located on dry, barren land from which all vegetation has been taken away. First, nine pits were dug, presumably going from North (the location of Hell) to South (the location of Heaven). The first six pits were marked off from the final three by an extra space. The nine pits were then marked off from the outside world by the drawing of a set of furrows. The pits themselves were covered with rubble or stones and stones were placed in the space between pits 6 and 7 (and on the place where the candidate entered the *barašnūmgāh*). The main purifier (*yōjdahragar*) had to be a consecrated priest of known probity, who had himself under-

[18] Cf. Choksy, *Purity and Pollution*, 23–52; Modi, *Religious Ceremonies*, 102–157; Boyce, *Persian Stronghold*, 111–138; *ead.*, "Barašnom", *Encyclopaedia Iranica* 3 (1989), 756–757; for photos of the ritual, cf. J. Bauer, *Symbolik des Parsismus. Tafelband* (Symbolik der Religionen 18), Stuttgart 1973, pl. 95; S.S. Hartman, *Parsism. The Religion of Zoroaster* (Iconography of Religions 14.4), Leiden 1980, pl. xix–xx (for the *barašnūm-gāh*) and xxviii–xxx (for the ritual).

gone the ritual. The priest wore his clean priestly vestments and held a container made of lead or iron on a stick with nine knots. The candidate entered the *barašnūmgāh* and texts were recited. Then the candidate had to enter the first pit and the priest handed him cow urine (*gōmēz*) in the container. The candidate had to wash his hands with *gōmēz* and then went on to cleanse all parts of his body (in a prescribed order, at the advice of the priest) with the *gōmēz*, beginning with the head and ending with the right, and then the left big toe. At that point, the demonic power of the corpse-pollution left the body of the candidate. The candidate then had to look at or touch a dog[19] and move on to the second pit, where the whole process started again. After he had completed his cleansing in the sixth pit, the candidate squatted in the space between pits number 6 and 7 and cleansed his body with dust, waiting for all traces of *gōmēz* to dry up. Then the candidate could enter the next pit, where his body was cleansed with water, once in pit number 7, twice in pit number 8 and three times in pit number 9. Having left the last pit, the body was fumigated with fragrant woods and plants and the candidate was transported to a place of seclusion (*armēštgāh*). There, he had to spend nine nights in isolation, during which he also underwent several minor ablutions. On the tenth day, he was allowed to leave the place of seclusion and was considered pure.

Such is the main structure of the *barašnūm*. Most elements of the ritual are well-known from other Zoroastrian purification rituals: selecting the proper place (away from fire and water and areas of human habitation); marking off the area by drawing furrows in order to prevent the pollution from spreading; the efficacy of reciting the proper Avestan formula; the presence of the dog; the purifying substances (*gōmēz*, dust and water); and the isolation of the candidate. Most of these elements are similar to prescriptions for dealing with less serious pollutions (reciting the proper texts; ablutions) or for dealing with corpses (isolation; showing the corpse to the dog).

What is striking in most of these rituals is the physicality of the pollution and its purification: loss of purity comes about through

[19] The presence of the dog during the ritual is due to the fact that the gaze of the dog chases the demons associated with a corpse away. Its presence is mandatory in ceremonies connected with corpses: the dog must be brought to look at the corpse (a ceremony called *sagdīd*).

contact with polluting substances. Pollution is an affliction of the body, caused by physical contact between the body and the source of pollution. The Zoroastrian concept of contact must be taken in a somewhat wider sense than usual: it includes eye-contact, for certain impurities are transferred by looking,[20] and it also includes indirect contact, for instance through intermediary utensils. This is the main reason for the nine-knotted stick: the nine knots on the stick prevent the impurity of the candidate undergoing the *barašnūm* from rising up to the priest and thus causing him loss of purity.

In early interpretations of the *barašnūm*[21] there is no indication of the fact that this ritual was intended for anything else than the removal of a serious pollution. There is no indication of the fact that the purification was held to be a spiritual cleansing rather than a physical one, nor is there any reason to believe that candidates could undergo the ritual for the sake of gaining spiritual merit. The *barašnūm*, it seems, was a ritual remedy against the bodily affliction known as impurity. The impurity itself had profound spiritual and social consequences, for it meant that a person could not engage in any contact with other Zoroastrians and could not perform his/her religious duties. Purity is a prerequisite for performing any religious act and those religious acts performed in a state of pollution are turned into their reverse: they harm the powers of good instead of strenghtening them and as a consequence they endanger the spiritual well-being of a person rather than support it.

In the sixth century C.E., the Byzantine lawyer Agathias noticed that Persians who unexpectedly recovered from a serious, life-threatening disease, were shunned by their fellow Persians: "[. . .] everyone turns away from him and avoids him as though he is accursed and still in the service of the infernal powers. He is not allowed to resume his former way of life until the pollution, as it were, of his expected

[20] The most famous case in this respect is the look of a woman in *menses*. A menstruating woman should not look at a fire, for instance, because she will pollute it. One of the clearest texts in this respect is *Dēnkard* 3.26 (DkM. 21). There it is written that only menstruating women have a "corpse-contaminated gaze" (*nasušōmand ᵛīnišn*), because they are the only ones to be afflicted with *Nasu*, the demon of the corpse, while alive.

[21] The main early interpretations of the *barašnūm* are the foundation text of the ritual in *Vd.* 8 and 9, together with its Pahlavi commentary (including a lenghty description of the ritual that is not part of the Avestan text).

death has been exorcised (*ἀποκαθαρθείη*) by the Magi, and he can take in exchange, so to speak, his renewal of life."[22] The "exorcism" to which Agathias refers is undoubtedly the *barašnūm*; his reference to this ritual is the only surviving evidence for the performance of the *barašnūm* in the Sasanian period. Agathias, moreover, suitably stresses the second important aspect of the *barašnūm*: it is a ritual of (re-)integration: a person who has suffered a pollution of the highest category (and this apparently includes various serious diseases) is *ipso facto* incapable of establishing contact with his fellow Zoroastrians. This mechanism of isolation is well known from Zoroastrian literature. It has been recorded by non-Zoroastrian observers, too: in the 5th century B.C.E., Herodotus (*Histories* 1.138) already observed that anyone who suffers from leprosy cannot mingle with other Persians; the same observation can also be found in a passage from Ctesias.[23] In the Avesta, whoever suffers from a serious disease (sometimes referred to as "the sign of Angra Mainyu" (*Vd.* 2.29)) is excluded from participation in rituals (Yt. 5.92–93) and may not enter the *var* that Yima makes, a Zoroastrian Noah's ark. He is, moreover, referred to as *vitərətō.tanū-*, "whose body is kept away" or "whose body is isolated." The oldest function of the *armēštgāh*, the place of seclusion where candidates for the *barašnūm* spend the nine nights of isolation, presumably was to isolate sufferers from certain diseases.

The only way of being re-integrated into the community was to undergo the *barašnūm*: no other purification ritual could take its place in this matter. This is also evident from later literature, where the *barašnūm* is compulsory for anyone converting to Zoroastrianism and for apostate Zoroastrians who wish to return to the faith.[24] The *barašnūm* is the only ritual capable of removing the most serious pollution.

These two things, the physical removal of pollution and the re-integration into the Zoroastrian community, remained the core aspects of the *barašnūm* up to the early Islamic period. In certain Pahlavi texts, however, we see that the *barašnūm* also came to be understood

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[22] Agathias, *Historiae* 2.22.7, translated by A. Cameron, "Agathias on the Sassanians", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 23–24 (1969–1970), 69–183, pp. 78–79. For the passage, cf. also De Jong, *Traditions of the Magi*, 229–250.

[23] Quoted by Photius, *Library* 72.42–45; cf. De Jong, *Traditions of the Magi*, 241–242.

[24] B.N. Dhabhar, *The Persian Rivayats of Hormazyar Framarz and Others. Their Version with Introduction and Notes*, Bombay 1932, 275–276.

as a ritual intended for the "purification" of the soul. This presupposes, of course, the idea that the soul can be polluted, which is alien to early Zoroastrianism.

An illustration of the "spiritualisation" of the ritual is the way in which the prescription of *Vd.* 8.97–103 was received in the later tradition. This text treats the subject of a person who has touched a corpse in a field. If dogs or vultures have already eaten of the corpse, there is no problem: he can purify himself with thirty ablutions. But if dogs and vultures have not yet eaten of the corpse, this person cannot purify himself. Therefore, he must perform fifteen ablutions and then run a mile; then, he must run until he finds someone else; when he finds someone, he must shout with a loud voice: "I have come into contact with a corpse, without intent of mind, speech or deeds; will you be able to purify me?" When that person refuses, he will share in a third of that "deed." The passage goes on in the same manner, until three persons have refused, share in the "deed" and the polluted person can finally purify himself.[25] Although the process of sharing the deed is not entirely clear, the main thrust of the passage is evident: someone has contracted the most serious pollution, is unable to purify himself and therefore unable to be touched; therefore, he has to warn someone else beforehand by calling out in a loud voice and describing the state he is in; subsequently, with the help of the other, he can be purified.

The *Pahlavi Vendīdād* to this passage characteristically makes the ritual aspects of the procedure explicit: the washing is referred to with a technical Avestan term (the "fifteen") and the phrase the polluted person must shout is interpreted as meaning "I am unable to wash myself" and at the end, although the Avesta clearly suggests that after the third refusal, he can purify himself and will be pure, the *PhlVd.* suggests that his purity is less than what is required: "There is one who says: he may perform any work (he wishes), but he must abstain from the worship of the gods."[26]

The passage from the *PhlVd.* is quoted by Manušcihr, with a considerable difference: Manušcihr interprets the passage as meaning

[25] For the passage, cf. J. Kellens, *Les noms-racines de l'Avesta*, Wiesbaden 1974, 173–174.

[26] *ast kē ēdōn gowēd kārīh hamē ōh kunišn u-š az yazišn i yazadān ōh pahrēzišn* (*PhlVd.* 8.103).

that the polluted person cannot perform any virtues, and that therefore his body must be purified, so that he will be able to purify his soul.[27] Part of his argument is devoted to the idea that only the properly performed *barašnūm* can purify the soul of a candidate and that this purification of the soul can only be accomplished through a purification of the body.[28]

From this estimate to the idea that the *barašnūm* is *more* a purification of the soul than a purification of the body is only a small step. Evidence for such an interpretation is only available from the Persian Zoroastrian texts, which are also the first texts to reveal the existence of the vicarious *barašnūm*.

3. *The vicarious* barašnūm

At a certain moment in the development of Zoroastrian rituals, the possibility arose to undergo the *barašnūm* vicariously: someone else could undergo the *barašnūm* for the purification of others. The evidence for this development is late. Its earliest clear attestations are in the *Ṣad dar* texts. This version of the ritual apparently became very popular and spread rapidly. The development seems to be contemporary with a distinction made in the ritual between the *barašnūm* for the removal of pollution (*rīman barašnūm ī nō šab*) and the *barašnūm* which was undergone to attain greater ritual purity or to acquire spiritual merit.[29] The latter version of the ritual was clearly an innovation, but in order to distinguish between the two, the former version of the ritual was altered: it now included the consumption of three sips of *gōmēz* and the recitation of the confession of sins.

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[27] Manušcihr, *Epistle* 1.2.11: "From this it is clear that he whose body is not purified-as long as he has not been cleansed-is incapable of acquiring virtue through his thoughts, words and deeds, and he is not able to purify his soul; so, even for the purity of the soul, purity of the body is indispensable" (*ciyōn aziš paydāgīhēd kū ka ān kē-š tan nē yōjdahr tā ka-š be šōyēd pad menišn ud gōwišn ud kunišn kirbag xwāstan nē tuwān u-š ruwān yōjdahrēnīdan nē tuwān; ēg pad-iz yōjdahrīh ī ruwān awizīrišnīg ast az ān ī tan yōjdahrīh*). For the passage (details of which are obscure), cf. also M.F. Kanga, "A Study of the first two Chapters of the first Epistle of Manuščihr Gōšn-Jamān", *Proceedings of the twenty-sixth International Congress of Orientalists*, vol. 2, New Delhi 1968, 218–225.

[28] His arguments are summed up in the third *Epistle*, which is studied by M.F. Kanga, "Sitīkar Nāmak i Manuščihr Gōšnjamān. A Critical Study", in: *Monumentum H.S. Nyberg* I (Acta Iranica 4), Leiden etc. 1975, 445–456.

[29] Choksy, *Purity and Pollution*, 39–40.

Two varieties of the vicarious *barašnūm* are known: one performed for a deceased person and one performed for a living person. The two versions are described in the *Ṣad dar* texts as follows:

> And with regard to the things they asked about the *barašnūm*, let them know that it is revealed in the religion that as long as the child is in its mother's womb, its food comes from the mother's womb; this is the reason that the woman is pregnant and does not menstruate. That which is the menstruation is intended so that the menstruation is the part which the child eats; and then it comes out and grows up and it is compulsory for him to undergo the *barašnūm*, so that he will be purified of that pollution. For just as the body is purified from pollution through water, the soul can be made pure with that ritual. If he has not undergone the *barašnūm* and leaves this world, their soul gives off an unpleasant scent and a large stench, just like the stench that comes from a corpse that lies for a month in summer; the Amšāsfands will be scared by that stench and cannot approach that soul and will not be able to make up his account and they will not allow him near the Cinwad bridge until the time that his child, if he has one, will undergo the *barašnūm* in his place and in his name, and will recite the confession of sins: then, that stench will diminish from his soul and after that, the Amšāsfands will make up his account and will bring him to his own (destined) place. Everyone must undergo the *barašnūm*. (*SDB* 72)

This text clearly shows the vicarious performance of the *barašnūm* for the sake of the soul of a deceased relative: the candidate by proxy is the son of the deceased man and the ritual is undergone in order to restore the purity of the soul of the deceased. The other passage has the same reasons for prescribing the *barašnūm*, but its description of the vicarious performance of that ritual is different:

> It is compulsory for men and women to undergo the *barašnūm*, because man eats the menstrual blood in his mother's womb. For that reason, he must undergo the *barašnūm* once, so that he will be purified of that pollution. For if he reaches the age of fifteen and has not undergone the *barašnūm*, the glory and purity of everything he touches diminishes and it is not fitting for him to touch the *drōn* [a cake used in several rituals, A.J.] or anything pure.
>
> It is revealed in the religion that if someone dies without having undergone the *barašnūm*, his soul stinks as badly as carrion after a month in summer and when his soul reaches the Cinwad bridge, the Amšāsfands and gods flee from the stench of that soul and will not be able to make up his account; he will stay at the Cinwad bridge and will not be able to cross and he will be very sorry, but it will do him no good.

> And if someone should undergo the *barašnūm*, but is unable to and does not do it, even if he applies *pādyāb* to his head a thousand times, he will not be purified from that pollution. **Nasrušt* is that pollution which is found in veins and sinews and flesh and bones; without the proper religious rite, nothing will be purified again.
>
> And also that person who undergoes the *barašnūm* for someone else,[30] must be a man who loves his own soul, speaks the truth and refrains (from sin), so that he occupies himself with purity and modesty; if, heaven forbid, deceit becomes apparent in him, in that reprehension, the priests must loosen (?) him one by one and give him as food to the dogs. They must look for someone who is purer and more abstinent, so that this sin of his will not (continue to) be produced. (*SDN* 36)

Here, it seems, the vicarious *barašnūm* can be undergone by anyone who conforms to certain moral standards. There is no mention of the performance of the *barašnūm* for a deceased person only. The structure, at any rate, is simple: a person who is not able to undergo the ritual personally (either because he is dead, or for other reasons), can ask someone else to undergo it for him and thus be cleansed.

Besides the ritual itself, another novel element is worth noticing: the idea that every person must undergo the *barašnūm*, because every person is polluted because of the fact that he eats the menstruation when he is in the mother's womb. This, too, seems to be a new idea in Persian Zoroastrian literature. Earlier Zoroastrian literature does not usually think in such terms of "collective" pollution. A parallel from the same texts is the idea that a woman, no matter how scrupulously she has observed the rules for menstruation, is always guilty of breaking these and should perform certain rituals to atone for these sins.[31]

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[30] There is no particular term used to refer to the vicarious variety of the ritual. In this text, it is referred to as the *barašnom-e mardomān*, "the *barašnom* of people." This particular usage recalls similar expressions (such as *zan-e kasān*, "the wife of persons," meaning "someone else's wife") which identify the qualified noun as belonging to someone else. The expression should therefore mean "the *barašnom* undergone for the sake of someone else." A similar expression is also found in *Nērangestān* 22.2, where a woman is said to be allowed to worship "at her own fire" (*pad ān ī xwēš*), but a child is allowed to worship "at someone else's fire" (*pad ān ī kasān*). Cf. F.M. Kotwal & Ph.G. Kreyenbroek, *The Hērbedestān and Nērangestān II: Nērangestān. Fragard 1* (Studia Iranica Cahier 16), Paris 1995, *ad locum*. The *Ithoter* 15 simply refers to the ritual as the *barašnūm* "for the intention of NN" (*be-niyyat-e folān*).

[31] E.g. SDN 41 (also SDB 41), where the ritual is called *daštān-gonāh* ("the sin of menstruation"): every woman must perform twelve of these, one each for the sins with which she has hurt heaven, the sun, the moon, fire, water, earth, wind, Khurdād (guardian of water), Mordād (guardian of plants), *xordak-gāh* (? Sraoša according to

The innovations in the vicarious performance of the *barašnūm* are perhaps best illustrated by looking at an earlier example and at the later practice. The vicarious *barašnūm* is never mentioned in Pahlavi literature. In fact, the long gloss on the *barašnūm* in *PhlVd.* 9.32, seems to argue against the existence of this variety of the ritual. There, it is said that "if he is unable to wash because of lack of strength, someone else must sit (in the pit) with him."[32] In the *Persian Rivāyats*, the evidence for the vicarious *barašnūm* is overwhelming, at least for the sake of a deceased person. In a list of rituals to be performed when someone older than fifteen has died, the *barašnūm*, undergone by a priest for the sake of the soul of the deceased, figures as a standard element.[33] The believers are urged, moreover, to undergo the *barašnūm* once every year[34] and a person who has not undergone the *barašnūm*, may not participate in the communal rituals.[35]

The *Ithoter* (late eighteenth century) carefully distinguishes for whose intention the ritual is performed; a priest who becomes impure must undergo the ritual twice: once for the restoration of his own purity and once vicariously for someone else.[36] In modern Parsi practice, the *barašnūm* is exclusively undergone by priests, either for their own ritual purity or vicariously, for the purity of others.[37]

The vicarious *barašnūm* for the soul of a deceased person fits in very well with a whole range of soul-services that grew in post-Sasanian transformations of Zoroastrianism.[38] These have been the subject of controversy, both in academic literature and among modern Zoroastrians themselves, because they seem to clash with what many scholars have perceived to be one of the fundamental elements of

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Dhabhar, *Persian Rivayats*, 220, n. 1), and polluting substances. The same ritual was later called *dwāzdah-homāst*: cf. Dhabhar, *Persian Rivāyats*, 219–221. It consists of twelve celebrations of the *Vendīdād* (which include 144 *Yasnas*!).

[32] *ud ka-š wad-zōrīh rāy be nē tuwān šustan, ā-š kas-ē abāg nišīnišn* (Anklesaria, *Pahlavi Vendidād*, 246).

[33] Dhabhar, *Persian Rivayats*, 176–178.

[34] Dhabhar, *Persian Rivayats*, 392.

[35] Dhabhar, *Persian Rivayats*, 323.

[36] *Ithoter* 5.7. The *Ithoter* (15.1–4) does stress, however, that it is not compulsory to undergo the *barašnūm* for the soul of a deceased relative.

[37] Choksy, *Purity and Pollution*, 40–42; for the Irani practice, where lay Zoroastrians still may undergo the *barašnūm*, cf. Boyce, *Persian Stronghold*, 111–114.

[38] M. Boyce, "Soul-services in Traditional Zoroastrianism and Late English Medieval Christianity: A Brief Comparison", in: H. Preißler & H. Seiwert (eds.), *Gnosisforschung und Religionsgeschichte. Festschrift für Kurt Rudolph zum 65. Geburtstag*, Marburg 1994, 389–398.

Zoroastrian throughout the ages: the idea that every person will be held responsible only for his/her actions performed when he/she was alive.

The general idea is this: the good and evil thoughts, words and deeds of every person are added to his account. When he dies, the soul will go to the Cinwad bridge, where he will meet the gods Sraoša, Mithra and Rašnu, who put his good and evil thoughts, words and deeds in a pair of scales and weigh them. The outcome of this weighing alone decides whether the soul will go to heaven, hell or the place of mixture. Even though the soul will want to change something, he will not be able to do so. This general structure can be observed throughout Zoroastrian literature and it does indeed compromise our understanding of the vicarious *barašnūm*. A second problem in understanding the development of the vicarious *barašnūm* is the earlier stress on the necessity of the physical cleansing. When the ritual is performed vicariously, this means that someone whose body is pure is cleansed and that this cleansing removes the pollution from the body of someone who is polluted, but unable to undergo the ritual himself. We have seen already that the *barašnūm* came to be considered a ritual for spiritual cleansing, but even if we grant such a spiritual interpretation, we would still face the difficulty of interpreting a physically exacting ritual intended for the bodily and spiritual purification of someone else.

Other scholars have given practical reasons for the development of the vicarious *barašnūm*: the care for the soul of a deceased relative, the impossibility for some persons to leave their business or work for a period of ten days. But this does not explain sufficiently how the ritual was perceived to work. There are no straightforward answers to that question in Zoroastrian literature. The best we can do, at the moment, is compare the vicarious *barašnūm* with other vicarious rituals, for the dead and for the living, and to see if the sudden occurrence of that ritual is somehow consistent with other developments in Zoroastrianism from roughly the same period.

4. *The vicarious confession of sins*

Confession of sins, in all likelihood, was an integral part of Zoroastrian observance from its early days.[39] Early sources suggest that persons

[39] For the confession of sins, cf. J.P. Asmussen, "The Avestan Terms *apaitita-*,

who had sinned had to confess their sins to a priest, who judged them and administered punishment (corporeal punishment; fines; rituals etc.). After that, the sin was considered to have been annulled. Various distinctions were made: sins that affected someone else (apart from the sinner and the gods) had to be settled with that person.[40] A distinction was also made between voluntary and involuntary sins and certain sins could not be annulled, even when confessed. Up to the late Sasanian period, it seems, this system remained intact.[41] We have, however, no less than seven versions of a very long fixed confession of sins, known as the *Patita* or *Petīt*. The titles of these confessions partly indicate their use: there is a general confession of sins for someone who wishes to expiate his sins before a priest (*Petīt pašēmānīh*); a confession one can recite privately for the expiation of one's sins (*petīt īxwad*); and a confession of sins for the expiation of the sins of a deceased person (*petīt ī wīdardagān*). These texts are known in Pahlavi and Pāzand versions; the status of a seventh version (in Pāzand only), the *Petīt Irānī*, is unclear.

There are no indications to suggest that these texts are old, even though they contain earlier layers, as there are no indications that the recitation of a fixed catalogue of sins is an ancient ritual in Zoroastrianism. But from the moment we find evidence for the recitation of this fixed text (in late Pahlavi literature), the evidence is overwhelming. Particularly in the *Ṣad dar* texts, the recitation of *petīt* is a prominent part of Zoroastrian daily observance. It is said that it removes all sins and will prevent someone from going to hell; parts of it should be recited daily, before going to sleep (that way, every breath one takes while asleep will cause a sin of a particular category to disappear); a man's last words should be a formula from the *petīt* and after a person's death, the *petīt* should be recited for him. In many cases, the recitation of this text will have been a vicarious recitation, whether the person is alive or not. Not every Zoroastrian knew this text by heart, and he could go before a priest and ask

paitita- and *paititi-* and their Significance in the Religio-Historical Development of Zoroastrianism", in: *idem; X"āstvānīfl. Studies in Manichaeism* (Acta Theologica Danica 7), Copenhagen 1965, 26–112.

[40] This is the sin known as *hamēmālān* or *hamēmārān*; cf. S. Shaked, "'For the Sake of the Soul': A Zoroastrian Idea in Transmission into Islam", *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 13 (1990), 15–32, pp. 21–22.

[41] Cf. Dk 6.123; E31d, for which, cf. S. Shaked, *The Wisdom of the Sasanian Sages (Dēnkard VI)*, Boulder 1979, *ad locum.*

the priest to recite the text for him; he himself should then recite shorter prayers simultaneously, but the recitation of the text in his intention did remove his sins.

The parallels with the vicarious *barašnūm* can easily be detected: from a ritual of personal confession, designed to deal with a particular sin, the *petīt* developed into a vicariously performed ritual, benefiting the living or the dead, in which another person confessed a fixed list of all possible sins, hoping that the particular sins the person actually committed were included. If that was not the case, the formula also contained phrases to include all sins that had not been listed separately. From a ritual that was to be performed for a specific occasion, moreover, the *petīt* developed into a ritual that was to be performed regularly, at least once during a lifetime, and repeatedly (vicariously) after death. The *petīt* was later included in the rituals to be performed during the *barašnūm*.

5. *Linking a person: the world of the* Ṣad dar *Texts*

The main obstacle for a satisfactory understanding of the vicarious *barašnūm* is the presumed autonomy of the individual. Both physically, in the sense that his own body is *not* actually washed, and spiritually, in the sense that he is to benefit from things he has not done himself, this autonomy is compromised. The problem is partly caused, it seems, by the modern positive evaluation of the whole idea of the autonomous individual. This is clear, for instance, from some of the more violent responses to the confession of sins, both in Western and in Parsi scholarly literature.[42]

It would be untrue to state that the whole idea of the autonomous individual in his unique responsibility for his own soul is absent from

[42] R. Pettazzoni, "Confession of Sins in Zoroastrian Religion", *Papers on Indo-Iranian and other Subjects* (Fs. J.J. Modi), Bombay 1930, 437–441 ("As a matter of fact, confession of sins seems to be rather incongruent with the very spirit of Zoroastrian religion in its genuine form" [*sic*], p. 437); C.E. Pavry, *Iranian Studies*, Bombay 1927, 168–193 ("the foolish and unZoroastrian idea that a dead man's sins could be atoned for by the recital of the Patet and by other prayers by strangers", p. 175); J.M. Unvala, "Patêt or the Confession of Sins", *Studi e materiali di storia delle religioni* 2 (1926), 89–93; Choksy, *Purity and Pollution*, 42 ("Such practice conflicts with the Zoroastrian doctrine that each individual is responsible for his or her own fate through actions performed while alive").

Zoroastrianism. From the earliest period of the faith we have information to support the presence of this idea in certain varieties of Zoroastrianism. One of the key elements of it is the fact that men and women are both equally responsible for their own salvation, an idea found in the earliest layer of the Avesta.[43] The basic pattern of the story of what happens to the soul after death also underlines the idea of every person's own responsibility for his own salvation: he/she will be judged according to the thoughts, words and deeds he performed while alive.[44] The importance of the idea of the individual in Zoroastrianism has at times been overrated, however, and no serious attempt seems to have been made to study the way the individual is perceived in Zoroastrian texts. Zoroastrian literature bears massive evidence to the effect that Zoroastrians in the pre-modern period did not perceive themselves as strictly autonomous individuals, but on the contrary viewed themselves as individuals linked in various distinct ways with their fellow Zoroastrians. It is likely, I would suggest, that these linkages provided Zoroastrians (at least implicitly) with the option of developing the vicarious *barašnūm*.

This can perhaps best be illustrated with materials from the *Ṣad dar* texts. This will provide us with a synchronic perspective of the period in which the vicarious *barašnūm* is first attested in Zoroastrian literature. There are various texts called *Ṣad dar*, "a hundred chapters," of which the two most important are the *Ṣad dar-e naṣr*, "the prose *Ṣad dar*," and the *Ṣad dar-e bondaheš*, "the *Ṣad dar* [beginning with the story] of creation."[45] The other, versified, texts are dependent on these. The date of these texts has not been established. They seem to be intermediary texts between the Pahlavi works of the ninth and tenth centuries and the Persian Rivāyats of the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries. This is evident from the fact that they frequently quote passages from Pahlavi texts[46] and are in turn frequently quoted

[43] A. de Jong, "Jeh the Primal Whore? Observations on Zoroastrian Misogyny", in: R. Kloppenborg & W.J. Hanegraaff (eds.), *Female Stereotypes in Religious Traditions* (Studies in the History of Religions 66), Leiden 1995, 15–41, pp. 23–25 (with references).

[44] A generous selection of texts on this subject is given by M. Molé, "Le jugement des morts dans l'Iran préislamique", in: *Le jugement des morts* (Sources orientales 4), Paris 1961, 145–175.

[45] These two texts were published by B.N. Dhabhar, *Saddar Nasr and Saddar Bundehesh*, Bombay 1909; a translation of the *SDN* can be found in E.W. West, *Pahlavi Texts III* (SBE 24), Oxford 1885 (many reprints), 255–361; the *SDB* is translated in Dhabhar, *Persian Rivayats*, 497–578.

[46] Cf., for instance, A.V. Williams, *The Pahlavi Rivāyat accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg* (Hist.Fil.Medd.Dan.Vid.Selsk. 60), Copenhagen 1990, vol. 1, 18–19.

in the *Persian Rivāyats*. They seem to be intermediary in another sense too: they show the clearest evidence for certain transformations of Zoroastrianism in the Islamic period. The influence of Islamic terminology and ideas is considerable: Islamic words and names are used instead of the traditional Zoroastrian terms.[47] The pantheon has also been reformulated in these texts: there is only one god (*īzad* or *yazdān*), who is accompanied by innumerable lesser divine beings who are called *amšāsfand* (a term traditionally reserved for the Zoroastrian Heptad, but here used for all (former) deities)[48] or *ferešte* ("angel"). A clear example of Islamic influence is the notion that God sent a plurality of prophets to the world to instruct mankind (*SDB* 74).[49]

The rituals discussed in these texts are all "personal" rituals, some of which appear to be new. Of some rituals that have been attested (however sparsely) in Pahlavi literature, they give the earliest full descriptions.[50] On the whole, the focus of the *Ṣad dar* texts is very much on the other world; countless passages stress the transience of this world and urge the believers to be prepared for the judgement of their souls. Two other aspects, finally, are worth being noticed. Occasionally, we find a completely different type of religiosity, resembling Gnostic ideas or perhaps Islamic mysticism, for instance in the phrase "he who knows himself, knows God."[51] The texts also reflect the situation of Zoroastrians under Islamic rule: it is said, for instance, that anyone who remains loyal to the faith *in this time*, will never go to hell (SDB 73).

The texts we are going to discuss are traditional in the sense that they are fully based in knowledge of the tradition. At the same time,

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[47] Examples are *tafsīr* (= *Zand*); *tawbah* (repentance); *ḥarām* and *ḥalāl* (permitted and not permitted); *šefā'at* (intercession); certain epithets of God (*ta'ālā; 'azza wa-jalla; tabārok*).

[48] Cf. *SDN* 87, where all calendar deities from Ohrmazd to Anīrān are called *amšāsfand*, or *SDB* 54 and 83 (Gošūrūn); 99 (Sroš), etc.

[49] This idea is of course ultimately of Manichaean origin, but in these texts it is undoubtedly due to Islamic views on the prophets. G. Widengren's attempt to find a Zoroastrian Iranian background for the notion of a plurality of prophets (*The Great Vohu Manah and the Apostle of God. Studies in Iranian and Manichaean Religion* (Uppsala Universitets Årsskrift 1945:5), Uppsala/Leipzig 1945, 62–71) is unconvincing.

[50] For example the *gētī-xarīd* (discussed already by Mānuščihr, *Dd.* 78.4–5; 79); the *zende-rawān* (*Dd.* 80; *YF* 126 (Weinreich); or the *dwāzdah-homāst* (*Dd.* 80.15).

[51] *SDB* 74.3: "And it is said in the religion that a man who knows himself, knows God" (*wa andar dīn gūyad ke x"īštan-šenās mardom īzad-šenās*).

they show quite different aspects of living Zoroastrianism than the Pahlavi books do. One of the areas where they follow traditional Zoroastrianism but, in the multitude of passages, give the impression of being innovative, is the way people and their virtues and sins are linked. The link between the spiritual and the material realities is well known in Zoroastrianism and has been discussed fairly often. Its basic idea, that any action performed in the material world is also performed in the spiritual world, underlies most Zoroastrian conceptions of sins, virtues and their retribution. But there are other links, too: those joining together men and women, their relatives (dead or alive) and their fellow Zoroastrians. These links, when established, influence the account of a person's sins and virtues: they can add to it and they remove from it and the individual sometimes can do nothing about it. The following list of instances is far from exhaustive.

a) *Parents and children*

Parents and children are linked in various ways. It is the duty of parents to instruct their children properly in the religion. The religious education of children is the responsibility of three persons: the father, the mother and a priest. Parents, who are adviced not to hit their children when they are very young (or only with a slender stick; SDB 86), must teach them in a gentle manner what is a sin and what a virtue. Up to the age of four or eight, the sins of children are not counted, and up to the age of fifteen, they are counted but less severely (SDB 86). Since children are instructed by their parents, all sins and virtues they perform are counted as if they were performed by their parents.[52] At the same time, children are supposed to obey their parents. If they do not obey them, they will have a miserable life on this earth and will have no hope of reaching heaven but will be sent to hell: "(Even) if the Amšāsfands are satisfied with that soul and release it, but the father and mother complain about him and will not be satisfied, the soul of that person will go to hell." (SDB 69.11). When a son disobeys his father three times, he becomes *margarzān* ("worthy of death," the most severe state of sin) and deserves to be killed (SDB 34.7). The contentment of Ohrmazd is linked with the contentment of the parents and the

[52] SDN 18; 51; 63; SDB 5; 29; 36; 61; 69; 86; 87. This is one of the most popular themes in these texts.

priest; whenever children hurt their parents or their priest, they hurt Ohrmazd and no virtue they perform will reach the spiritual beings. Every day, children have to ask their parents and the priest what to think, speak and do (SDN 40).

As is well known, having children is a duty for Zoroastrians. It is not just a good deed, but having a son is indispensable for every Zoroastrian, because mankind is indispensable for the fight against evil. A person who does not have children cannot cross the bridge and will therefore have to remain before the bridge; such a person is called *borīde pol* ("someone who is cut off from the bridge"): "If someone does not have a child, he is called *borīde pol*, which means that the way to the other world is cut off for him, and he cannot go to the other world. It does not matter how many good deeds and virtues he has performed, he will stay before the Bridge, he will not be able to cross the Cinwad-bridge and his account will not be made up. And every Amšāsfand who comes across that place asks this thing first: "Have you produced a replacement for yourself in that world or not?" And because he has not produced one, they will pass him by and his soul will stay there, at the Bridge, full of pain and grief." (SDN 18.5–8).

The only solution for these souls is to appoint an adoptive son to them. This adoptive son is known as *stūr* and may be a son from a lesser wife, or from a relative (SDN 54), who should be properly appointed by the priests (SDB 62). The actions performed by the adoptive son, just as actions performed by the natural son, also accrue to the merit of the adoptive father (SDN 18). "For relatives, no deed is more necessary than this one, and whenever they are appointed as *stūr* of someone, it is just like they have brought a dead man back to life and to that merit there is no limit." (SDN 18.19)

Certain types of merit and sins are passed on through the generations: the unrepented sin of a *mehr-drūj* (Phl. *mihrōdrūz*, "someone who breaks a covenant, does not keep his word") is passed on to the next generation (*SDN* 25.4). The same applies to spiritual merit: not only the virtues of one's children are added to one's own account, but also of their children and their children's children (*SDB* 61). One of the myriads of descendants may be the one who will ask God for forgiveness for the sins of his ancestor: someone who has been confined to hell will have a black mark on his forehead at the resurrection and one of his descendants may finally convince Ohrmazd to remove that mark (*SDB* 61.5).

The function of most of these texts, of course, is to express the importance of having children. They do so by stressing how the fate of the individual soul depends on his ancestors and his descendants, who through their actions may influence his well-being.

b) *Husbands and wives*

Women's lives in these texts are described exclusively in the terms of their family relations.[53] Their best chance of accumulating merit is having children. When a girl is nine, she must be engaged, when she is twelve, she must be given to her husband. If not, every time she menstruates and washes herself, one *tanāfūr* sin is added to the father's account and this is weighed first at the Cinwad bridge (SDB 63). If a woman herself refuses to be married, she will be sent to hell permanently (*ibidem*). Once married, the woman should not perform the daily religious duties as men do, but they should worship their husband and prostrate themselves nine times before him: "In the good, pure religion of the Mazdā-worshippers women are not ordered to pray (*nīyāyeš kardan*), for their prayer is this, that three times every day, in the morning, at the afternoon prayer and at the evening prayer, they stand before their own husband, fold their arms and say: "What do you think, so that I shall think the same and what do you need, so that I shall say it and what do you need so that I shall do it; what do you command?" (SDN 59.1–2).[54]

Women are expected to think, speak and do whatever their husbands order them, "for the contentment of Ohrmazd is linked with that of the husband." (SDN 59.3) If they do not have a husband, they should go before their father, brother or whichever man is in charge (SDB 85.8). Whenever the husband is not satisfied, the wife cannot go to heaven. If a woman does not obey her husband, he is not obliged to feed her; in general, the husband should treat his wife as his child (SDB 34.4–5).

c) *Laymen and priests*

Outside the family bounds, the first and most important relation people can have is that with their priest.[55] In texts discussing this rela-

[53] Cf. De Jong, "Jeh the Primal Whore?", 18–23.

[54] More or less the same ideas are found in SDB 69.

[55] For this subject, cf. Ph.G. Kreyenbroek, "On the Concept of Spiritual Authority in Zoroastrianism", *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 17 (1994), 1–15.

tion, obedience again is the key term. Everyone must choose his or her priest, who is in spiritual authority (*dastwar/dastūr*) over him/her. No virtue performed without this spiritual guidance will be added to one's account (SDN 8). Everyone must go before their priests and listen to them and do what they are told, and they should not question their authority (SDN 97). Anyone who does not perform a certain duty, because he has not asked what to do, will have a double sin: one for not doing it and one for not asking it (SDB 6).

d) *Owners and slaves*

If one buys a slave, one should not sell him to an unbeliever. If one does sell him, every sin of that slave is added to the account of the seller (SDB 30).

e) *Owners and animals*

Even between humans and animals, some relations require attention. Even though everyone must always be careful to abstain from sin, one should be particularly careful when one has eaten meat. If one eats meat and sins, every sin that the animal commits (has committed) goes to the account of that person (SDN 23).

f) *Charity and the "deserving poor"*

An important and highly unsafe relation is that between the bestower and the receiver of charity. The main idea here is that one has to be sure that the person to whom something is given really deserves it. There is great merit, for instance, in feeding someone who is hungry,[56] but only if he is deserving (*arzānī*), because his virtues and his sins are transferred to the person who fed him. Both options are actually found; sometimes it is said that the virtues of the person who has received charity are added to the account of the giver, but not the sins (SDN 20) and sometimes both virtues and sins are said to be added to the account of the giver (SDN 29). Not giving something to someone who is worthy is a great sin. Giving something is

[56] The merit of charity is often symbolised by the idea that there are 33 ways leading to heaven: if someone has been generous in charity, he can choose any of these 33 ways, if not, only one way will be open to him (*SDN* 79; *SDB* 74). Generosity for the sake of the performance of a ritual is worth twice the amount of merit: once for the ritual and once for the priest (*SDB* 74).

a great merit, that will continue to increase as long as one lives (SDB 87.11–12). Giving something to someone who is not worthy is a great sin, for it equals destroying that which was given (SDN 29; SDB 74).

g) *The* hamēmālān *sin*

In the *Ṣad dar* texts, we frequently come across the idea of remaining before the bridge. We saw one case of it in the section on children: someone who has no children will remain before the bridge, because he did not produce a substitute in this world; therefore, he will not be accepted into the other world and is called *borīde-pol.* But this is not the only group of souls waiting before the bridge. All persons who have wronged their fellow men and have not resolved these wrongdoings will also remain before the bridge, until the person they harmed dies and his soul arrives at the bridge: then and there their conflict is resolved. The main example that is given of this belief, is the case of a man who slept with someone else's wife. He will have to wait before the bridge, until the husband arrives; then, he is punished for seducing the woman and when the husband is satisfied, his account will be made up. Some of his merit, moreover, will be transferred to the account of the husband. Similarly, in the case of thieves, whatever they stole is taken back from them fourfold and their merit is transferred to the account of their victims.

h) *The transfer of merit, intercession, and the* ganj-e hamīše-sūd

A particular class among the souls of the deceased are those who, according to the system, would not be permitted to go to heaven, but have performed one particular good deed, for which they will be admitted to heaven. This can be done in various ways: a god or several gods can intercede before Ohrmazd on behalf of the deceased person's soul: Ohrmazd can then show his benevolence, punish the sinner before the bridge and admit him into heaven (SDB 40, the intercession is performed by Srōš if the proper rituals in his honour have been performed; SDB 42, the intercession is performed by the Spirit of the Gāthās, who has transformed himself into a wall which bars the way to hell). The intercession can also be done by the souls in heaven, for instance for all those who remain faithful to Zoroastrianism in this difficult time (SDB 73).

Another way for a sinner to be admitted into heaven is to benefit

from the transfer of merit: we have seen this already in the preceding section: if one has been wronged in one way or another, the merit of the wrongdoer is transferred to the account of the sinner and this may tip the balance (e.g. SDB 64, for theft; SDB 65, for slander; 71, for robbery with violence). Should the wrongdoer have no merit to dispense, it is taken from the heavenly store-house of merit known as the *ganj-e hamīše-sūd*, "the treasure of everlasting benefit." This was built up by the collective effort of all those who have done good works. It is at the discretion of those who dwell in Paradise to dispense merit from it. The souls of the deceased can also dispense their own merit to such a soul, as they are said to do to the faithful in these times of hardship (SDB 73) or to anyone who has celebrated the *gētī-xarīd* ritual (SDB 42).

i) *Rituals for the dead and for the living*

We have already seen many examples of the fear of remaining before the bridge, of not being able to be judged and having to wait: this happens in the case of unsolved sins involving someone else, in the case of a person who has no offspring and no adoptive children and to a person who has never undergone the *barašnūm*. There are several other factors which may compromise a person's chance of going to heaven. A famous example is weeping over the dead: every tear that is shed is collected in a river, and the soul of the deceased will not be able to cross that river (SDN 96). Connected with this idea, of course, is the idea that certain rituals performed for the sake of a deceased relative help his crossing. This is one of the main reasons for the popularity of the vicarious *barašnūm* and the recitation of the confession of sins. These are rituals intended to remove certain obstacles, such as unrepented sins and bodily impurity. Other rituals help the soul cross the bridge by providing him with a guardian, the god Srōš, who will accompany the soul for three days if three Vendīdāds in his honour are performed (a ceremony called *tars-astūdān*; SDB 40).[57]

Two rituals probably unknown to Sasanian Zoroastrianism enjoy a great popularity among the writers and audience of the *Ṣad dar*: the *gētī-xarīd* ("buying the (other) world") and the *zende-rawān* ("the

[57] For the *Vendīdād* of Srōš, cf. G. Kreyenbroek, *Sraoša in the Zoroastrian Tradition* (Orientalia Rheno-Traiectina 28), Leiden 1985, 154–156.

living soul"). Both are rituals designed to ensure a person a place in heaven. The *gētī-xarīd* ceremony was intended for a Zoroastrian who had died without having performed the *nowzūd*, the initiation into the Zoroastrian community. Because of his virtues, he might go to heaven, but he could never reach the highest heaven; therefore, the *gētī-xarīd* was to be performed. An additional benefit of this ceremony was that it encouraged all those who dwell in heaven to let the deceased person's soul share in their merit: that way, he would always reach the highest heaven (SDB 42; SDN 5). The *gētī-xarīd* came to be performed for living persons too, to secure their place in heaven.

The *zende-rawān* is a ritual for the living soul, destined to secure him a place in heaven. The *zende-rawān* could be performed as often as one liked, and its celebration removed 210,000 deadly sins (70,000 for every day of celebration) (SDB 43; SDN 58).

From these examples, which can be multiplied *ad libitum*, it becomes clear that the idea of the individual who is responsible for his or her own actions only is not at the centre of the Zoroastrianism evident from the *Ṣad dar* texts. This responsibility certainly exists, and it is of great importance, but the system is much more diverse. It shows how a person can benefit from actions performed by others, how sins can be annulled or multiplied, how virtue can increase without any virtuous deeds being performed and above all how one's actions influence, and are influenced by, those of others. In other words, the individual in these texts is part of an extensive network of links that embed him in the various groups of which he/she is a member: the family, the Zoroastrian community of the living and the community of the dead.

Many of the ideas listed above are not new. Evidence for the transfer of sins and virtues, for instance, can be found in the Avesta (cf. *Vd.* 8.97–103, discussed above) and in Pahlavi texts.[58] The rituals performed for the souls of the deceased are generally thought to have been part of Zoroastrian observance from its earliest days.[59] What seems to be new in the *Ṣad dar* texts, however, is the frequency with which these links are stressed and the more systematic

[58] A good example is *Nērangestān* 7.5 (Kotwal-Kreyenbroek): "If a priest is very able, he may sell vermin (*xrafstar*; killing these increases merit, A.J.) which he has caught for a price; both parties thus acquire twofold merit: both for catching it and for killing it."

[59] Boyce, *HZ* I, 319.

way in which they illustrate the responsibilities of every man and every woman for those with whom he/she has established some sort of connection.

6. *The vicarious* barašnūm *as ritual of integration*

We have argued above that the *barašnūm*, in its earliest interpretations, was a ritual of re-integration. A person who had become polluted had to undergo this purification in order to be able to have contact with his fellow Zoroastrians once again. In this early system, the *barašnūm* was an *ad hoc* ritual, performed whenever the need arose. In the course of the development of Zoroastrianism, several changes occurred in the nature of the purification: it became compulsory for every Zoroastrian, it became meritorious to undergo it every year, whether one had been polluted or not, and it came to be considered as a ritual that purifies the soul and increases the spiritual merit of anyone who performed it. A parallel development could be observed in the confession of sins: from a ritual performed after the actual sin it developed into a compulsory ritual, to be performed regularly (even daily) and eventually into a ritual that annuls sins and increases spiritual merit. Both rituals also came to be applied to the souls of deceased relatives and came to be performed for living Zoroastrians who were unable to perform them themselves.

These developments show some changes that took place in the development of Zoroastrian ritual practice. It is easier to document changes in performance than changes in interpretation, but the two cannot properly be separated. It seems that the rituals which involve lay participation (such as the *barašnūm* and the confession of sins) were spiritualised and lost some of their original *ad hoc* nature. This spiritualised interpretation of the rituals opened the way to their vicarious performance; this variety of the rituals was perceived to work just as other ritual and non-ritual actions could be said to "work" in the lives of others: through the many links which bind the community together. For the vicarious *barašnūm* this implied a concretisation of its earliest function: it continued to serve as a ritual of integration, in this case a ritual that could integrate the souls of the deceased into the community of the blessed.

THE EXPIATION OF IMPIETIES COMMITTED WITHOUT INTENTION AND THE FORMATION OF ROMAN THEOLOGY

JOHN SCHEID

A certain number of texts make a difference between a Roman praetor who would intentionally violate the interdiction to do official business on days consecrated to the gods (the *dies nefasti*), and the one who would do it unintentionaly.[1] Cicero recalls the same opposition.[2] With some supplements, the same distinction is given by cultural

[1] Varro, *On the Latin language* 6, 30: *Praetor qui tum (i.e. die nefasto) fatus est, si imprudens fecit, piaculari hostia facta piatur; si prudens dixit, Q. Mucius aiebat eum expiari ut impium non posse* ("the praetor who has made a legal decision at such a time, is freed of his sin by the sacrifice of an atonement victim, if he did it unintentionally; but if he made the pronouncement with a realization of what he was doing, Quintus Mucius said that he could not in any way atone for his sin, as one who was impius (transl. by Kent: had failed in his duty to god and country)"; Macrobius, *Saturnal.* 1, 16, 9–10: 9. *Adfirmabant autem sacerdotes pollui ferias, si indictis conceptisque opus aliquod fieret. Praeterea regem sacrorum flaminesque non licebat uidere feriis opus fieri, et ideo per praeconem denuntiabant, ne quid tale ageretur: et praecepti neglegens multabatur. 10. Praeter multam uero adfirmabatur eum, qui talibus diebus (i.e. festis) imprudens aliquid egisset, porco piaculum dare debere. prudentem expiare non posse Scaeuola pontifex adseuerabat, sed Umbro negat eum pollui, qui opus uel ad deos pertinens sacrorumue causa fecisset uel aliquid ad urgentem uitae utilitatem respiciens actitasset. Scaeuola denique consultus, quid feriis agi liceret, respondit: quod praetermissum noceret* ("the priests used to maintain that a rest day was desecrated if, after it had been duly promulgated and proclamed, any work was done on it. Furthermore the rex sacrorum and the flamines might not see work in progress on a rest day, and for this reason they would give public warning by a herald that nothing of the sort should be done. Neglect of the command was punished by a fine, 10. and it was said that the one who had inadvertently done any work on such days had in addition to the fine to make atonement by the sacrifice of a pig. For work done intentionally no atonement could be made, according to the pontiff Scaevola; but Umbro says that to have done work that concerns the gods or is connected with a religious ceremony, or any other work of urgent and vital importance does not defile the doer. 11. Scaevola infact, when asked what might be done on a rest day replied that anything might be done which it would be harmful to have left undone").

[2] Cicero, *Laws* 2, 9, 22: *Sacrum commissum, quod neque expiari poterit, impie commissum esto; quod expiari poterit, publici sacerdotes expianto. <. . .> periurii pœna diuina exitium, humana dedecus <. . .> impius ne audeto placare donis iram deorum* ("sacrilege which cannot be expiated shall be held to be impiously committed; that which can be expiated shall be atoned for by the public priests. <. . .> For the perjurer the punishment from the gods is destruction; the human punishment shall be disgrace").

regulations from Spoleto, Luceria, Furfo, and the rules about tombs;[3] these rules are known by inscriptions dating from the three last centuries of the Republic, lets say from 300 to the beginning of the common era; the tomb-regulations are also from a later period.

Together with other casuistical features, the differenciation between a violation that can be expiated, and an unexpiable violation has been invoked as a proof for the decadence of the Roman religion.

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[3] S. Panciera, "La lex luci Spoletina e la legislazione sui boschi sacri in età romana", dans *Monteluco e i Monti sacri*, (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull'Alto Medievo, 1994), 28 sq.: *Honce loucom | nequ<i>s uiolatod | neque exuehito, ne// que | exferto quod louci siet,| neque cedito | nesei quo die res de// ina | anua fiet; eod die | quod rei dinai cau// [s]a | [ffiat, sine dolo ced// re| [l]icetod, seiquis | uiolasit Ioue bou// id | piaclum datod, | seiquis scies| uiolasid dolo ma// lo,| Iouei bouid piaclu// m datod et a(sses) (trecenti) | moltai suntod;| eius piacli | moltaique dicator// [ei] | exactio est[od].* ("Nobody shall violate this grove, export or take away what belongs to the grove. Nobody shall cut (wood) except for the requirements of the annual divine service; on that day it shall be allowed to cut without malice for the requirements of divine service. If someone violates (this rule), he shall offer a piaculum of an ox to Jupiter; if someone violates (it) intentionaly with malice, an expiatory sacrifice of an ox shall be offered to Jupiter, and three hundred asses shall be perceived as a fine. The offering of the piaculum and the collection of the fine shall be the responsability of the dicator"); A. Degrassi, *Inscriptiones Latinae Liberae Republicae*, 504 (Luceria, Beneventum): *In hoce loucarid stircus | ne [qu]is fundatid, neue cadauer proiecitad, neue parentatid. | Sei quis aruorsu hac faxit, [in] ium* (alii: *[ciu]ium*) *| quis uolet pro ioudicatod n(ummum) (quinquaginta) | manum iniect<i>o estod. Seiue mac[i]steratus uolet multare, | moltare [li]cetod.* ("Nobody shall put dung, abandon a corpse or celebrate a funeral service in this grove. If someone violates this (rule), who ever wants shall put hand on him as if he would have been condamned and perceive a fine of fifty sestertii. If the magistrate wants to perceive a fine, he can do it." Degrassi, *Inscriptiones Latinae Liberae Republicae*, 508, l. 14–16 (Furfo, Sabina): *Sei qui heic sacrum surupuerit, aedilis multatio esto, quanti uolet. Idque ueicus Furf(ensis) mai(or) pars fifeltares sei absoluere uolent siue condemnare liceto.* ("If someone steals something sacred in this place; there shall be a fine perceived by the aedilis. This fine can be matter of an absolution or a condemnation by the vicus Furfensis, that is the majority of the fifeltares"); M. Crawford et al., *Roman Statutes*, (London: Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies, Suppl. 64, 1996): I, 403, *Lex coloniae Genetiuae Iuliae*, chapter 73: *Ne quis intra fines oppidi colon(iae)ue, qua aratro | circumductum erit, hominem mortuom | inferto neue ibi humato neue urito neue homi| nis mortui monimentum aedificato. si quis | aduersus ea fecerit, is c(olonis) c(oloniae) Genetiuae Iul(iae) (sestertium) (quinque milia) d(are) d(amnas) esto, | eiusque pecuniae cui uolet petitio persecu| tio †exactioq(ue)† esto. itque quot inaedificatum| erit Iluir aedil(is)ue dimoliendum curanto. si | aduersus ea mortuus inlatus positusue erit, expianto uti oportebit.* ("No-one is to bring a dead person within the boundaries of a town or a colony, where (a line) shall have been drawn around it by a plough, nor is he to bury him there or burn him or build the tomb of a dead person. If anyone shall have acted contrary to these rules, he is to be condemned to pay to the colonists of the colonia Genetiva 5,000 sesterces; and there is to be suit and claim for that sum by whoever shall wish (? according to this statute?). And whatever shall have been built, a duumvir or aedile is to see to its being demolished. If a dead person shall have been brought in or deposited contrary to these rules, they are to make expiation as shall be appropriate").

Theodor Mommsen, and Georg Wissowa, and even S.P.C. Tromp, who has written a fine thesis on Roman expiation in 1925, in which he corrects other exagerations of this kind, considered that the traditional sternness of Roman religion somehow softened during those years.[4] And this aggiornamento was supposed to be another sign of the decadence of Roman piety. Tromp writes: "By this way the Roman religion soon lost its vital strength. It is clear what mischief this alteration did to the Roman people".[5]

There is more. One must add to these so-called signs of decadence the contradiction between the glorification of *fides*, of the good faith, and Emperor Tiberius' statement about perjury as related by Tacitus: "As of the perjury, it was on the same footing as if the defendant had taken the name of Jupiter in vain: the gods must look to their own wrongs."[6] The apparently unconcerned behavior of the *pontifex maximus* Tiberius agrees with the tradition as found in Cicero, and, centuries later, in the Codex Iustinianus quoting a statement made by Emperor Severus Alexander in 223 A.D.[7] Now perjury deeply offended Jupiter, the Penates, the Genius of the Emperor, the Divine Augustus, and other gods traditionnaly appointed as witnesses of an oath. And so one has the impression that the Romans of this age no longer showed any interest in their gods.

Facts however are far more complex. Before drawing general conclusions that are determinated by a Christian representation of god, and religion, one should first try to analyse very carefully the casuistical

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[4] Th. Mommsen, *Droit pénal romain* (Paris, 1907), III, 126 sq. (= *Strafrecht*: 811 sq.); G. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer*[2] (Munich: Beck, 1912), 392 sq.; S.P.C. Tromp, *De Romanorum piaculis* (Dissert.: Leiden, 1921).

[5] Tromp 151: *Sic religio Romana paulatim evanescens vim vitalem amisit. Quanto detrimento haec depravatio fuerit populo Romano in promptu est.*

[6] Tacitus, *Ann.*, 1, 732–4: *Rubrio crimini dabatur uiolatum periurio numen Augusti. quae ubi Tiberio notuere, scripsit consulibus non ideo decretum patri suo caelum, ut in perniciem ciuium is honor uerteretur (. . .) ius iurandum perinde aestimandum quam si Iouem fefellisset: deorum iniurias dis curae* ("to Rubrius the crime imputed was violation of the divine power of Augustus by perjury. When the facts came to the knowledge of Tiberius, he wrote to the consuls that a place in heaven had not been decreed to his father in order that he might be turned to the distruction of his countrymen. <. . .> As of the perjury, it was on the same footing as if the defendant had taken the name of Jupiter in vain: the gods must look to their own wrongs").

[7] Cic., *Laws* 2, 9, 22 (see note 2); Codex Iustiniani, IV, 1, 2 rescript of Severus Alexander: *Iusiurandi contempta religio satis deum ultorem habet. Periculum autem corporis uel maiestatis crimen secundum constituta diuorum parentum meorum, etsi per principis uenerationem quodam calore fuerat periuratum, inferri non placet* ("the god's vengeance is enough for whom holds in contempt the respect of the oath").

evidence quoted. It's what I will do. I'll try to explain the rules quoted in their Roman context, before proposing a few hypothesises on my own about the evolution of Roman religion, and theology as testified by the mentionned casuistry. Doing this, I'll also describe, the traditional representation of sin, and guilt in Roman religion.

The discussion about the distinctions stated, for exemple by the jurist and pontifex maximus Q. Mucius Scaevola, between deliberate and undeliberate offences against the gods, and between deliberate offences with or without malicious intent (*dolo malo*), is mainly about the substitution of this stern difference by a *mildere Praxis* during the II^{d}, and the I^{t} c. B.C.E. Are not included in the debate the offences required by cultic necessity as attested in some of the rules of a grove near to Spoleto, in the responsa of the jurists Umbro, and Scaevola, by two pontifical decrees of imperial time,[8] and indirectly by the proceedings of the arval brethren, who offer expiatory sacrifices before entering the grove of dea Dia, in order to celebrate the cult service or to do maintenance-work.[9] All of these activities were assimilated to unintentional offences.

So the discussion refers to five documents: the regulations of the groves in Spoleto and in Luceria, the regulations of the Jupiter-temple in Furfo, all located in Central or South Italy, a passage of the constitution of the Colonia Genetiva Iulia in Southern Spain, and finally a passage in Macrobius that has already been mentionned. The discussion is about the following points:[10]

> – *si quis scies uiolasit dolo malo, Iouei bouid piaclum datod et a(sses) CCC moltae suntod* (Spoleto) "if someone violates (it) intentionally with malice, an expiatory sacrifice of an ox shall be offered to Jupiter, and three hundred asses shall be perceived as a fine";
> – *sei quis aruorsu hac faxit, [in] ium quis uolet pro ioudicatod n(ummum) I manum iniect[i]o estod* (Luceria) "if someone violates this (rule), who ever wants shall put hand on him as if he would have been condamned, and he shall perceive a fine of fifty sestertii";
> – *sei qui heic sacrum surupuerit, aedilis multatio esto quanto uolet. Idque ueicus mi(nor) pars Fifeltares(?) sei apsoluere uolent siue condemnare liceto* (Furfo) "if

[8] Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum X, 8259; cf. VI, 1884.

[9] See J. Scheid, *Romulus et ses frères. Le collège des frères arvales, modèle du culte public dans la Rome des empereurs* (Rome: Bibliothèque des Écoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, vol. 275, 1990), 551–570.

[10] Mommsen, *Droit pénal*, III, 126–127 = *Strafrecht.*, 811–812.

> someone steals something sacred in this place, there shall be a fine perceived by the aedilis. This fine can be matter of an absolution or a condemnation by the vicus Furfensis, that is the majority of the fifeltares";
> – *praeter multam uero adfirmabatur eum, qui talibus diebus (i.e. festis) imprudens aliquid egisset, porco piaculum dare debere* "neglect of the command was punished by a fine, 10., and it was said that the one who had inadvertently done any work on such days had in addition to the fine to make atonement by the sacrifice of a pig" (Macrobius 1, 16, 10).

Even in a different formulation, all of these documents repeat the same rule. On one hand they state that the guilty person can expiate the undeliberate offence by offering a sacrifice.[11] He possibly also pays a fine, a *multa*, for having desobeyed the injunction of the regulation or by the herald (*praeco*).[12] On the other hand the texts of Varro, Macrobius, and Cicero (*Leg.* 1, 40; 2, 9, 22) clearly state that if someone with a malicious intent violates a sacred place, a holy day or a tomb, he remains for ever inexpiable. This fact is corroborated by a collection of famous scandals reported by the Roman historians.[13] The second part of the rule, relating to the inexpiable sin, is sometimes formulated in an elliptic or ambiguous way, and actually the whole discussion between the historians is about the interpretation af this ambiguity.

Lets start with the clearest document, the lex sacra of Spoleto. Mommsen and Wissowa have interpreted the regulation relating to the intentional violation as follows: the guilty person now offers a piaculum and pays a fine, and so his case is closed. Thus, *eine mildere Praxis* instead of the archaic inexpiable guilt. But this interpretation misses the target. As suggested by Tromp, one must understand 1) that the sinner has to pay a fine because he has violated a public regulation, and 2) that the piaculum is not offered by him but by the priests of Spoleto or by the dicator mentionned, according to a certain number of examples. That was for example the rule reported by Macrobius about the violation of the regulation relating to the flamines; in 204 B.C.E. the violation of Hera Lacinia's grove by

[11] A pig in Macrobius, an ox at Furfo.

[12] Tromp 118, about Macrobius.

[13] See J. Scheid, "Le délit religieux dans la Rome tardo-républicaine", dans *Le délit religieux dans la cité antique* (Rome: Collection de l'École Française de Rome, vol. 48, 1981): 117–171, especially 137–146.

Pleminius was resolved in the same way by the Romans and the Crotoniates: the Romans immediately replaced the stolen goods, and offered a piaculum; Pleminius was arrested, and sent to Rome to be tried. We don't know for what crime he was to be tried, because Pleminius obscurly died in prison. Anyway he never is reported asking pardon to the gods, and offering an expiatory sacrifice.[14]

The constitution of the Colonia Genetiva[15] (#8) only rules the violation of the lex, and has no indications about a religious penalty or the status of the impius. Like in Furfo, where the impius—the lex doesn't say if intentional or not—has to pay a fine if he violates the prohibition of theft in groves, if the Fifeltares, likely the local authority, want so. The Lex of the Colonia Genetiva orders that the local authorities, the duumviri or the aedilis—, and not the guilty person—must demolish a tomb illegally built within the boundaries of the city. The succeeding rule is again ambiguous, and apparently bears out Wissowa's interpretation: "And whatever shall have been built, a duumvir or aedile is to see to its being demolished. If a dead person shall have been brought in or deposited contrary to these rules, they are to make expiation as shall be appropriate." Now who is concerned by this expiation, which is necessary if a dead person has already been buried within the limits of the city, and who is supposed to offer the piaculum? Wissowa[16] seems to believe that it is the impius, the one who has built the tomb, and buried someone in it. But in that case, he could only be an *imprudens*, an inintentional *impius*, because the *impius prudens* cannot himself expiate his crime. The text of the constitution being elliptic, we have to ground on tradition. But anyway, the debate is absurd, because the expiation relates to another offence. Indeed to bury someone within the boundaries of the city is not properly speaking an impiety. This space is neither sacred nor inaugurated,[17] and the prohibition only relates to public order, and the offence cannot be taken as a violation and pollution of a sacred place, as for example defined by the lex Spoletina.

In his *De legibus* 2, 58, and 61, Cicero refers only to the Twelve

[14] Scheid, *Délit*: 139–140.
[15] See note 3.
[16] Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus*, 393, note 4.
[17] A. Magdelain, "Le pomérium archaïque et le mundus", *Revue des études latines*

Tables, where the origin of the prohibition was, according to him, the risk of fire. And farther he quotes a decree of the pontifices according to which it was "unlawful (*non esse ius*) for a grave to be made in a public place", and that all of the monuments built on public ground could be, and were demolished, for "a place which was public property could not be subjected to private cultic obligations". There is nothing about impiety in these rules. Moreover no one of the rules related to the building of graves within the city mentions impiety. So a rescript of Hadrian only punishes those who buried someone within the city,[18] and the Riccardi fragment[19] of a constitution states that the place "where anyone shall have been interred or buried in contravention of these rules, is to be clear, and unfettered by religio".

Consequently no impiety, intentional or not, follows the violation of this kind of rule.[20] A tomb was a *locus religiosus* which was property of the di Manes.[21] Even illegally built, a tomb was a *res religiosa* once the funeral had been celebrated, and the deceased body buried in it. Consequently those who demolish illegal tombs, and transfer the buried bodies, in our case the municipal authorities of

54, 1976–77, 71–109 = *Ius imperium auctoritas. Études de droit romain* (Rome: Collection de l'École Française de Rome, vol. 133, 1990), 155–191; "L'inauguration de l'*urbs* et l'*imperium*", *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome* 89, 1977, 11–29 = *Ius auctoritas*, 209–228. About this prohibition Cicero (*Leg.* 2, 58, and 61) refers to the law (Twelve Tables, *Roman Statutes*, II, 711) and to profane motives, and not to the will or the property of the gods.

[18] *Digesta* 47, 12, 3.

[19] *Roman Statutes*, I, 490, col. 1.

[20] There is no relation between the situation defined by the lex of the Colonia Genetiva, and the story told by Suctonius, *Domitian* 8, of an imperial libertus who had build a tomb for his deceased son with stones destinated to the reconstruction of the Capitoline Temple. Doing this he had committed a sort of sacrilegium, a theft of sacred property, aggravated by the pollution of almost sacred things by their contact with a deceased person. Domitian had the monument demolished, the stones, and the remains of the deceased person thrown into the sea. The anecdote is given among other examples of the extreme severity of Domitian. He exagerated in considering the misappropriation of stones by his libertus an impiety, because the stolen stones still hadn't been consecrated, but only destinated to the Capitole. Suetonius gives no other indication about the procedure. His story is not complete, it is limited only to the main decision of Domitian. What it doesn't tell are the expiation rites Domitian certainly had ordered because every opening, modification, and obviously every destruction of a tomb was an impiety.

[21] Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus*, 479.

the Colonia Genetiva, had to expiate their violation of the illegal tomb. This violation obviously was undeliberate or at least without malice, because it was done with regard to public interest. The duumvir or aedilis probably offered the sacrifice to the di Manes before putting hand on the tomb. So the piaculum mentionned by the chapter 73 of the Lex coloniae Genetivae has nothing to do with the individual person who had violated the rule, and cannot be used in our discussion.

Consequently, the evidence we have examined until now doesn't show any softening of the penalties imposed on an intentional impius. According to complete, and clear evidence, an intentional offence against the gods was inexpiable. This rule was very explicitely defined by Q. Mucius Scaevola, around 100 B.C.E., and by the later evidence in Varro, and Cicero; and the exampla of the imperial period always represent the terrible end of the Gottesverächter.

But Mommsen, and Wissowa were right, in some way. The rules edicted by Q. Mucius Scaevola contain a *mildere Praxis*. If we admit, as all of the jurists and historians do, that "in the beginning", there was only one degree of guilt, the inexpiable impiety, then the difference between deliberate and undeliberate offence, repeated or instituted by Scaevola, was a great progress. Now the possibility was officially given to the unintentional sinner to repair the damage done, and to expiate his deed himself. It's this difference we must analyse if we want to study the history of sin and guilt in Rome. I'll come back to it in a moment.

Before that, I must explain the apparent off-handedness of the pontifex maximus Tiberius.[22] Does it contradict the severity observed in the matter of the offences against the gods as claimed by Mucius Scaevola and Cicero?

As a matter of fact, Tiberius' decision was not at all contrary to the tradition. We find nearly the same formulation in Cicero's *Laws*, 2, 37, where an ideal legislation is proposed: *periurii pœna diuina exitium, humana dedecus*, "for the perjurer the punishment from the gods is destruction; the human punishment shall be disgrace".[23] The infamy mentionned by Cicero, which was officially signified during the

[22] See note 6.
[23] See note 2.

Republic by a blame of the censors, agrees with Tiberius' statement. It also agrees with the testimony of the so-called leges sacratae, that is "followed by an oath" of the desecration: they never provide sanctions for the perjury itself, but only punish the refusal of taking the oath.[24] Tiberius' statement is also very close to the Emperor Severus Alexander's formulation of 223 A.D. in the Codex Iustinianus: *iuris iurandi contempta religio satis deum ultorem habet*,[25] "the god's vengeance is enough for whom holds in contempt the respect of the oath". In other words, the convicted perjurer was not punished by mortal justice for his very crime, but by the immortals themselves. He only was abandonned by the mortals as an impius.

There are examples of that kind of conduct. In 216 B.C.E., after the battle at Cannae, Hannibal sent as ambassadors to Rome some of the Romans whom he had made prisonners. They previously sweared that they would return to the camp of Hannibal. But with the intention not to return, but without breaking their oath, all or one of them returned to the punic camp shortly after the departure pretending to check a last detail. He or they considered they were now freed from the oath. The Romans were not very happy about this witty perjury. They did not give them back to Hannibal, but, says Livy, "the censors charged them of all possible infamy, at the point that a few of them killed themselves, and that the others were not only excluded for life-time from the forum but even from light and public life".[26] As Cicero recalls, the censors always were extremely carefull in matter of perjury.[27]

We do not know if the civic community always "abandonned" the perjurer by a formal blame which would exclude him from public and religious life, or if he just was considered impius, and henceforth ignored by everybody. The statements of both Tiberius, and

[24] Y. Thomas, "Sanctio. Les défenses de la loi", *L'écrit du temps* 19, 1988, 62-84, especially 68, footnote 25. See for example the Lex Latina of Bantia, *Roman Statutes*, 200, l. 16–20: (the elected candidates) *iouranto [ita utei i(nfra) s(criptum) est. eis – – – – – – pro ae/de Castorus palam luci in forum uorsus a.s.o. [. . . seese quae ex h(ace) l(ege) oport]ebit facturum neque sese aduorsum h(ance) l(egem) facturum scientem d(olo) m(alo) neque seese facturum neque intercessurum [esse q(uo) h(aece) l(ex) minus setiusue fiat qu]ei ex h(ace) l(ege) non iourauerit is magistratum inperiumue nei petito neiue gerito neiue habeto neiue in senatu [posthac sententiam deicito ne]iue quis sinito neiue eum censor in senatum legito.*

[25] C.Iust. IV, 1, 2.

[26] Liv. 22, 61, 9. see also Liv. 24, 18, 5–6.

[27] Cic., *De off.* 3, 31, 111.

Severus Alexander imply that, even if the exempla insist on the vengeance of the offended god, general contempt was the common rule. Because the emperors would not even accept an accusation of maiestas against the *Divi* offended by a perjury. Anyway, the statement of Tiberius agrees with the tradition: it did not cancel the offence, but just considered the perjurer an *impius*, whom he abandonned to the divine vengeance, in other words he pronounced what the jurists call a *deditio noxae*.

Now, if we consider the treatment of the *impii* in general, we see that actually the *deditio noxae* was always practised. As a rule the punishment for impiety was the breaking off of solidarity with the *impius*, and his abandon to the injured party, in other words to the offended god, in order to permit him to take vengeance on him. And as I already have told, the gods have their revenge, on the perjurers[28] like on the other *impii*. The Romans always stress that the divine anger represents an enormous danger for the whole city, if it doesn't cut all relations with the guilty person (Liv. 29, 18, 9). And that's precisely the system of the *deditio noxae* in civil, and in international life, as it has been reconstructed by the jurists.[29] Fernand de Visscher, whose book on the *deditio noxae* still is a common reference, defines the *deditio noxae* as following, distinguishing between two phases: "The first phase begins as soon as the crime has been commited. During this phase the *deditio noxae* is only the right or the means of the group for escaping the impending vengeance. During this period the group can be freed by the exile or *dimissio*, the repudiation or the denial of the guilty person, as well as by any other act implying the breaking off of the solidarity with him. The second phase starts with the summons by the victim or his parents. The group of the guilty person now is forced to hand him over. From now on the group can only be freed by a *noxae deditio* to the victim or his group".[30] The obligation of *noxae deditio* "has never been sanctioned

[28] A tradition reported by the antiquarian Granius Flaccus, *De Indigitamentis*, fr. 8 (Huschke 109), king Numa had asked the gods by a vow to take vengeance for perjury ("*Numam Pompilium, cum sacra Romanis conderet, uoto impetrasse, ut omnes dii falsum iuramentum uindicarent*"). Cf. also Liv., 3, 2, 4–5; 29, 18, 8–9.

[29] F. de Visscher, *Le régime romain de la noxalité. De la vengeance collective à la responsabilité individuelle* (Bruxelles: 1947); RE, Suppl. VII (1940) s.v. noxa, 587–603; noxalis actio, 604–663 (Z. Lisowski); M. Kaser, *Das römische Privatrecht*[2] (Munich: 1971), 163–165.

[30] F. de Visscher, *Le régime romain de la noxalité. De la vengeance collective à la responsabilité individuelle* (Bruxelles: 1947), 50–51: "(. . .) permettent de distinguer dans le

by a civil action, De Visscher goes on, but only by the coercive means of the magistrate. And it is permitted to see these means acted by public authority as a simple entail of the collective vengeance against the refractory group, and its head".[31] The international *deditio* which perfectly corresponds to this principles, finally shows that "if, in circumstances in which the international customs consider it efficacious, the offered *deditio* is refused by the offended state, it will be sufficient to free the state of the guilty person from every guilt, even if it's response is only limited to the expulsion of the guilty person from the city".[32] As the father of our Q. Mucius Scaevola stated during the famous case of the *deditio* of the consul Hostilius Mancinus in 137 B.C.E. to an Iberic city, the *deditio* was, from the Roman side, a deed of sovereignty which was independant from the *receptio* of Mancinus by the injured city. So whether the other party accepted the *deditio* or not, the *deditio* of Mancinus by the Romans was conceived as an expiation, which would free the Roman people from the perjury committed by Mancinus. Transposed in a religious situation, one could say that by recognizing the status of inexpiable *impius* to the author of a crime against the gods, the Roman people freed himself from every responsability.

In other words, in the traditional procedure, it was by recognizing publicly the offence and its author that the Roman authorities carried out the *derelictio*, and broke off the solidarity with the guilty person. Now the procedure is exactly the same in the case of an offence against the gods. The crime and the name of the guilty person were publicly announced, one way or the other, and the authorities decided if the sinner was definitely *impius* or not. In case of a heavy offence, that is of an intentional action, the magistrates could also stress the breaking off of solidarity with the *impius* by offering

régime de l'abandon noxal deux phases très différentes. La première s'ouvre à l'instant même du délit: l'abandon noxal ne représente encore qu'un droit ou un moyen pour le groupe de l'offenseur d'échapper à la vengeance collective qui le menace. Pendant cette période, cette libération peut d'ailleurs être obtenue non seulement par un exil ou *dimissio*, répudiation ou désaveu, mais par tout acte de quelque nature qu'il soit, impliquant rupture de solidarité avec le coupable tels qu'une adoption, un affranchissement, une aliénation, etc.

La deuxième phase s'ouvre avec une interpellation de la victime ou de ses parents. Le groupe de l'offenseur se voit sommé de livrer le coupable. Et à compter de cet acte de procédure, il n'obtiendra plus sa libération que par un abandon noxal effectué entre les mains mêmes de la victime ou de son clan."

[31] De Visscher 53.

[32] De Visscher 137.

an expiatory sacrifice, and possibly by reparing material damage, eventually by inflicting a fine or another legal sanction to the impius for the violation of a public law or of his public duties as a magistrate. One understands now that these punishments were mainly intended to prove the innocence of the Roman community, who had prohibited all acts that could offend its divine partners. Anyway the procedure of the *noxae deditio* as described, again agrees with the statement of Tiberius, who on one hand accepts the denunciation of a perjury, but on the other repeats in one of his witty formulas the old principle of the *noxae deditio*. We have also heared that in the case of a private or an international offence, the effective vengeance of the offended was not a necessary consequence of the *noxae deditio*: the procedure of the dereliction of the guilty person to the offended party primarily recognized his right to take vengeance. The rest was a private matter of the offended. So the fact that the gods apparently don't react, as implied by the consequences of a perjury in daily life, should not be interpreted as a token of religious indifference. On the contrary, it is the mark of tradition and does by no means signify that the crime was not considered very serious.

As far as I know, the problem has never been set in these terms. The jurists have used the anger of the gods as testified by the exempla of their interventions, and the old legal formula *sacer esto* ("may he be consecrated" to the gods) as the ultimate explanation of the *noxae deditio* in general. The gods were considered offended by any heavy crime because they supposedly protected morality, and justice. Justice so was founded on religion. There have been long discussions about this. It is not my subject here. I only want to analyze the process of divine vengeance. Neither do I want to open the question of the *sacratio* of the criminals, which has recently been studied, once again, by Roberto Fiori.[33] As a matter of fact, save the texts about perjury, there is no testimony which would show that in the case of a divine offence, the *noxae deditio* of the *impius* actually was a formal *sacratio*. I would distinguish between these two procedures. On one hand the community hands over the guilty person to the offended god, which means that they let him take vengeance if he wants to, on the other they consecrate the guilty person to a god,

[33] R. Fiori, *Homo sacer. Dinamica politico-costituzionale di una sanzione giuridico-religiosa*, (Naples: Jovene, 1996).

they make the guilty his property. It is, in some ways, a gradation of the consequences of impiety. The *sacratio* would be the sollemn handing over of the guilty person, the definition of someone as an *impius* a silent one.

The *noxae deditio* is closely related to the right to take vengeance. It is often said that this right and duty were almost dead at the end of the Republic as a consequence of Sulla's reforms in 80 B.C.E. Now, Yan Thomas has shown that the right, and even the duty to take vengeance were a positive value, which was efficient until the end of the first century C.E. It was the intrusion in civil life of the emperor, possessing the right of life, and death, which progressively made the vengeful function vanish from forensic life. Anyway until the beginning of the I century B.C.E., vengeance was often taken violently, and the civil conflicts gave lots of opportunities to do so.[34] Sulla's judicial reforms apparently created a public way to settle conflicts. But as a matter of fact, it was only a new form token over by the vengeance,[35] which still remained for over a century a solid value. As for the procedure of the *noxae deditio* of a free citizen it disappeared as late as in the times of Justinian.

I would infer from this, that the divine right to take vengeance, as acknowledged by the *deditio* of the intentional *impius*, is not necessarily an archaic institution. There is no reason to admit that only for religious offences this right should have disappeared before the beginning of the I century B.C.E.

Contrary to private revenge, divine vengeance never has been converted into a legal procedure. There were actually a few attempts at the end of the II century B.C.E. to create impiety trials: the case of three Vestals in 114–113, and maybe the trial of M. Aemilius Scaurus in 104. But these very specific trials were not the beginning of a new procedure. Neither can we accept Mommsen's, and Wissowa's idea that the *piaculum* in certain regulations of the last century B.C.E. has to be considered as the religious equivalent to the fine, the *multa*, as we have seen. The so-called mildere Praxis so is not comparable with the institutionalisation of vengeance by Sulla's reforms. And as Yan Thomas stresses, these reforms are not to be perceived as a

[34] Y. Thomas, "Se venger au forum. Solidarité familiale et procès criminel à Rome (Premier siècle av.—deuxième siècle ap. J.C.)", in R. Verdier, J.P. Poly, *La vengeance. Études d'ethnologie, d'histoire et de philosophie. 3. Vengeance, pouvoirs et idéologies dans quelques civilisations de l'Antiquité* (Paris: Cujas, 1984), 65–100, especially, 67.

[35] Thomas, *Se venger*, 68.

mildere Praxis of vengeance. As a matter of fact, the vengeance only took in 80 B.C.E. a judicial form, and actually gained a new vitality for more than a century.

So we can conclude that, even under the Empire, the punishment of religious guilt was done in a way that was at one and the same time very traditional, and in harmony with the contemporary customs.

Let us now come back to the rules which are at stake. Two facts are highly interesting, the noxae deditio, and the hierarchy of guilt.

F. de Visscher, and his fellow-jurists stress the fact that the *noxae deditio* actually was a progress in the juridic conceptions.[36] But that it never developped into a formal civil process. It always remained a practice which was part of public law; depending on the coercive means of the magistrate, it was rather politic than juridic. De Visscher writes: "The *deditio noxae* is not an arrangement based on a common legal rule, and bringing the settlement of a litigation. As in the case of the extradition, it is a transaction by which one of the powers confronted abandons one of its members in order to hand him over to the justice of the other power. It is a settlement from power to power, in one word, it is a political settlement".[37]

De Visscher considers this practice as an remain of a period when the settlements of conflicts between more or less independant groups were realized by detail-agreements rather than by legal solutions founded on a common norm. Maybe, but things had not changed a lot in historical times. We still are confronted with public settlements between cities or families, done under the authority of the magistrates and priests, not under the authority of a common law. I would suggest to translate the definition given by the jurists in historical terms, and consider the *deditio noxae* simply as a form of political settlement that allowed private or international vengeances to be taken.

According to that procedure, that means that the political authorities of the city went between the two parties, so to speak taking

[36] De Visscher 26.

[37] De Visscher 71: "L'abandon noxal n'est point un arrangement qui apporte au litige une solution basée sur une règle juridique commune. De même que l'extradition, c'est une transaction par laquelle l'une des puissances en présence abandonne un de ses membres pour le livrer à la justice propre de l'autre puissance. C'est un règlement de puissance à puissance, en un mot, un règlement *politique*."

upon themselves the control of vengeance. This control was acted on the designation of the guilty person, and on his provisional arrest, which also protected him from immediate retaliation, and made sure he could be handed over to the injured party.[38] As a last step Sulla's reforms reinforced the public control of the vengeance, as we have seen. The *noxae deditio* so was closely related to the structures and conceptions of the *civitas*.

The same is true for the second aspect of the procedure, the establishing of the guilt. It matters little for my perspective whether there were or not two historical phases in the conception of the responsability, a first phase when the responsability was collective, and a later phase when the individual responsability was invented. At least equally important is the distinction between intentional and unintentional offence, which represents another intrusion of the civitas in the right to take vengeance. As L. Gernet has shown with regard to the development of Greek Law, and Max Kaser about the Roman *deditio noxae*,[39] this distinction bridles and controls the desire for vengeance of the injured party. The autorities arrest the presumed guilty person and examine, according to reason and justice, if the fault has been intentional or not. And it is only after having verified, and established the degree of guilt that the authorities hand over the guilty person to the injured party.

If we put this conclusion into a religious context, we notice that the traditional settlement of the offences against the immortals depends on the same ideology of the city. The priests and the magistrates lay hands on the presumed guilty person, and check the degree of his guilt before handing the *noxium caput* over to divine vengeance. In other words, the temporal authority come between a mortal and an immortal, defering the divine right to vengeance, while they rationally check if their revenge is justified. The offence itself is like all other offences: an injure to the prestige or the property of the gods. It is an external, material offence, such as one can commit against the other partners of the city. Homicide is obviously not included,

[38] J. Svenbro, "Vengeance et société en Grèce archaïque. À propos de la fin de l'*Odyssée*", in Verdier-Poly, *La Vengeance*, 47–63, has shown that in archaic Greece, by the creation of criminal law, the city had appropriated the right to take vengeance, restricting so the prestige which the big families won by taking vengeance for every offence.

[39] L. Gernet, *Recherches sur le développement de la pensée juridique et morale en Grèce* (Paris: Leroux, 1917); Kaser, *Privatrecht*, 147.

but the violation of a tomb can also be an injure to the physical integrity of a deceased person.

Such conception of the offence that seems totally material, and which often assimilates the guilty person to his criminal deed, and consequently presents him like a monster, does not exclude the notion of intent and of interiority. A clear distinction is drawn between intentional or inintentional offence, sometimes by the guilty persons themselves. But all cases of repentance and remorse concern unintentional injures. Those who acted with malicious intent apparently are ignorant of repentance and remorse. The exempla, which are transcriptions of the traditional rule, all present the *impius* as remorseless, and suffering the terrible vengeance of the gods which often is a sort of retaliation.

That's what the historians, and poets tell, but if you open different books, you can find different or rather complementary conceptions of guilt. We do not have Roman tragedies of the fifth century B.C.E. like scholars of Greek history, and we must be satisfied with philosophical texts from the I century B.C.E. Cicero, for example, who firmly states in his *De legibus*[40] that intentional impiety is inexpiable, nevertheless describes the *impius* feeling guilty and assailed by remorse. Whatever the reasons of this remorse may be, regret for having violated a natural law[41] or the great moral categories,[42] it is evident that the guilt here is an interior feeling. Some years ago I presented this interiority of guilt as an innovation. Today I would rather say that we cannot use texts like the ones I have quoted in order to reconstruct the evolution of the concept of guilt, because we do not have at our disposal a Vth century B.C.E. Cicero, whose conceptions could be compared with the later ones. So I would consider the material and the psychological representation of guilt, and impiety two different and complementary approaches. I would not exclude that the archaic period did know interiority. Only the balance between objective or interiorised guilt was different. The predominant conception of impiety, at least during the historical period, refered to the civil relations between mortals and immortals, without taking into account the guilty person and its conscience. Cicero himself

[40] Cic., *Leg.* 1, 40.
[41] Cic., *Leg.* 1, 40; 2, 15–16.
[42] Cic., *Off.*, 3, 104 in this passage he stresses that actually, in daily life, the gods do not care for perjury.

stresses[43] that it was the city's interest that people respected the natural Law, that means the philosophical prescriptions.

Anyway, like the *deditio noxae* in general, the handing over of the inexpiable *impius* to the offended god bears the seal of the polis ideology. In this procedure the gods are treated like fellow-citizens or like another city. They are subject to the same laws as the other partners of the city. Such conclusion is not isolated. In Rome, the same representation is implied, or rather stated by the procedure of divination, by the notion of sacred, by the opposition between piety and superstition as well as by Roman myth. According to all of these traditional institutions, notions or tales, the gods are supposed to behave like fellow-citizens, respectful of the civil pact, and not like jealous and brutal tyrants.

In a religious system without revelation and Holy Book, punitive sanctions for impiety are very important. Far more than the features of the dialogue with the gods or the status of their property, the right to take vengeance definishes ritually the very nature of the immortals. The rules I have analysed actually state a very central point of Roman theology. Q. Mucius Scaevola and his followers called it the civil theology, and as a matter of fact, it was closely linked to the city, and its fundamental representations. One can even suppose that it was related to the development of the polis ideology during the VIth and Vth centuries B.C.E. According to the civil theology, formulated by Roman scholars, experts and poets, analysing the ritual tradition, the gods submitted of their own free will to the rationality of the city, and they protected it. Like the Roman elite, the gods were supposed to respect the dignity and the freedom of their fellow-citizens. They obviously needed to convince the Romans of their good intentions. The repeated sharp attacks of Roman intellectuals, and occasionally the public repression against superstition, show that the contest with superstition lasted for ever, and that civil theology always remained a very actual question in Roman religion.

[43] Cic., *Leg.* 2, 16.

YOM KIPPUR IN THE APOCALYPTIC *IMAGINAIRE* AND THE ROOTS OF JESUS' HIGH PRIESTHOOD[1]

Yom Kippur in Zechariah 3, 1 Enoch 10, 11QMelkizedeq, Hebrews and the Apocalypse of Abraham 13

Daniel Stökl

Die propitiationis indigent omnes qui peccaverunt.[2]

My aim in this paper is twofold. First, I want to investigate the mythopoeic power of Yom Kippur in the formation of the apocalyptic *imaginaire* around the eschatological Day of Judgment. Second, I want to make some new suggestions for the role of this apocalyptic *imaginaire* of Yom Kippur in the development of the high priestly Christology in earliest Christianity.

By *imaginaire* I mean the collective repertoire of motifs[3] from which an author derives the items with which to weave his text. It is the *langue* of the group whereas the text, the result of the individual imagination, is the *parole*.[4] It contains elements (pictures, terms, motives) and more or less strong associations between them. The repertoire of all elements and associations connected to a certain idea X (e.g. Yom Kippur) is called the *imaginaire* of X (in this case, Yom Kippur).

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[1] This small paper has been written in memory of my beloved friend Ruth (Rabba) Heckscher who passed away a few weeks after the workshop. I am very grateful to the participants of the workshop for their comments and to Lukas Mühlethaler Rabbi Ze'ev Gotthold, Dr. David Satran, Profs. Daniel Schwartz, Guy Stroumsa (all Jerusalem), Hermann Lichtenberger (Tübingen), and Michael Swartz (Ohio), who read earlier copies and made valuable suggestions. Many thanks to Evelyn Katrak, who made an earlier version readable for non-German speakers. The responsibility for the remaining mistakes is, of course, my own.

[2] Origen *Homilies on Leviticus* 9:1:1.

[3] This term was a suggestion by Prof. Galit Hasan-Rokem (Jerusalem).

[4] Or, like Philippe Desan formulated: "Il ne faut toutefois pas confondre imagination et imaginaire. L'imagination relève d'une performance individuelle et se décèle au niveau de la <parole>, alors que l'imaginaire ressort du collectif et ne se conçoit qu'en tant que <langue>" (*L'imaginaire économique de la Renaissance*, Paris, 1993, p. 9). In no case do I intend a connection to Jungian archetypes, on which the influential work of Gilbert Durand was formulated (*Les structures anthropologiques de l'imaginaire*, Paris ^{12}1992 = 1959).

In order to keep the *imaginaire* subject to scientific critique, elements and associations have to be extant in texts. The methodological advantage of the *imaginaire*, however, is that any given element has to be associated with one text only, to prove that this imagination is within the possible range of the *imaginaire*.

John Collins stressed "that apocalypses, like myths, are concerned with patterns and impressions rather than with consistent doctrines and titles".[5] Rather than developing a stringent theology, apocalyptic literature can juxtapose ideas and associate freely without necessary consistency. Therefore, approaching the apocalyptic literature, with its associativeness and lack of consistency, with the idea of an *imaginaire* seems particularly promising.

As the first step in establishing the apocalyptic *imaginaire* I want to demonstrate the general influence of Yom Kippur's Az'azel-rite on the myth of the punishment of the Fallen Angels as told in *1 Enoch* 10. In the next step, I will examine another text of this genre, *11QMelkizedeq*. This text has some special features in common with the *Letter to the Hebrews* (in the following, simply *Hebrews*), which points to a shared *imaginaire* as origin. In the third step, I will investigate the less known *Apocalypse of Abraham*, which links *Zechariah* 3 to the apocalyptic imagery of Yom Kippur. Since in the Greek version of *Zechariah* 3 the high priestly protagonist is called Jesus ben Jozedeq, I want to suggest that this text has been of major importance for the high priesthood of his namesake, Jesus ben Josef of Nazareth. In the fourth and last part I will apply this conception of Yom Kippur in the apocalyptic *imaginaire* to the high priest Christology in its earliest stage, prior to *Hebrews*.

Yom Kippur is the only Jewish ritual to be performed by the high priest alone, and the only time when the holy of holies is entered in order to pray and to sprinkle blood. Of the complicated ritual prescriptions I will focus on two points: First, I will concentrate on the scapegoat rite, when a goat is driven into the desert to a mysterious place or a demon called Az'azel. The second point of interest will be the final changing of the priestly vestments at the end of the main part of the ritual, when the high priest takes off the white

[5] J.J. Collins, "Apocalyptic Literature," in: R.A. Kraft & G.W.E. Nickelsburg, *Early Judaism and Its Modern Interpreters* (The Bible and Its Modern Interpreters 2; Atlanta 1986), p. 353; idem: "Methodological Issues in the Study of 1 Enoch: Reflections on the Articles of P.D. Hanson and G.W. Nickelsburg," *SBL.SP* (1978) 315–322.

linen robes, which he wears on Yom Kippur only, and puts on the magnificent garments described in *Exodus* 28.[6]

Part One: The General Influence of Yom Kippur on Jewish Apocalyptic Sources—1 Enoch[7]

In the complicated textual and literary history of the Book of the Watchers (*1 Enoch* 1–36) chapters 6–11 have gained special interest. Not only do chapters 1–36 seem to be a conglomerate of several originally independent traditions of different provenance, but also chapters 6–11 are usually seen as coming from two different strands woven together.[8] The two interwoven versions tell the myth of the

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[6] Examinations of the Temple ritual of Yom Kippur as described in the Rabbinic sources can be found in Y. Tabori, *Mo'adei Israel beTekufat haMishna vehaTalmud* (Israel's festivals in the Mishnaic and Talmudic period) Jerusalem 1995 (Hebrew); and in K. Hruby, "Le Yom Ha-Kippurim ou Jour de l'Expiation" *L'Orient Syrien* 10 (1965) 41–74, 161–192, 413–442. It has to be taken into account that these text present the ritual as it *should* have been and not necessarily as it was performed.

[7] We have versions in Ethiopic, Greek and since the discoveries of Qumran also partially in Aramaic, which almost certainly represents the original language of composition. M.A. Knibb edited and translated the Ethiopic versions (*The Ethiopic Book of Enoch: Vol. 1, Text and Apparatus, Vol. 2. Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, Oxford 1978). I always compared with the recent (German) translation by S. Uhlig, *Das äthiopische Henochbuch*, (JSHRZ 5:6; Gütersloh 1984). The Greek text was edited by M. Black, *Apocalypsis Henochi Graeci* (PVTG 3; Leiden 1970), who also published an English translation with commentary: *The Book of Enoch or 1 Enoch: A New English Edition with Commentary and Textual Notes*, (Studia Veteris Testamenti; Pseudepigrapha 7; Leiden 1985). The Aramaic Fragments were published and commented by J.T. Milik, *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumrân Cave 4*, (Oxford, 1976). On the fragments in Coptic and Syriac compare the editions. On the advantages and disadvantages of the different translations and editions compare the review article by F. Garcia Martinez, & E.J.C. Tigchelaar, "The Books of Enoch (1 Enoch) and the Aramaic Fragments from Qumran" *RQ* 53/14 (1989) 131–146. On the idiosyncratic work of Milik compare the critiques by M. Sokoloff, "Notes on the Aramaic Fragments of Enoch from Qumran Cave 4" *Maarav* 2 (1979) 197–224; J.C. Greenfield, & M.E. Stone, "The Enochic Pentateuch and the Date of the Similitudes" *HThR* 70 (1977) 51–65; idem "The Books of Enoch and the Traditions of Enoch" *Numen* 26 (1979) 89–103; M. Stone, "The Book of Enoch and Judaism in the Third Century B.C.E." *CBQ* 40 (1978) 479–492; J.C. Vanderkam, "Some Major Issues in the Contemporary Study of 1 Enoch: Reflections on J.T. Milik's The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4" *Maarav* 3 (1982) 85–97.

[8] The extant version is usually dated to the third century before the Common Era at the latest. Cf. J.C. Vanderkam, *Enoch and the Growth of an Apocalyptic Tradition* (CBQ.MS 16; Washington 1984), pp. 110–114; Stone (1978); Garcia Martinez/ Tigchelaar (1989). The earliest paleographical data (*4Q En*^{a}) brings us down to 200–150 B.C.E. (Uhlig 1984:479).

Fallen Angels who deceive humanity and introduce sin into the world. Scholarship defines them as the Asa'el- and the Shemihaza-strata.

Paul Hanson and George Nickelsburg proposed two quite opposite solutions for the exact redactional relationship between these strata.[9] While a profound discussion of this relationship is beyond the scope of this paper,[10] I will try to build the argument anew for an influence of Yom Kippur on the extant version of *1 Enoch* 10,[11] based on the arguments by Devora Dimant, Paul Hanson and Ryszard Rubinkiewicz. This chapter describes the punishment of the Fallen Angels, who are led by a certain Asa'el:[12]

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[9] P.D. Hanson, "Rebellion in Heaven, Azazel and Euhemeristic Heroes in 1 Enoch 6–11," *JBL* 96 (1977) 195–233; G.W.E. Nickelsburg, "Apocalyptic and Myth in 1 Enoch 6–11," *JBL* 96 (1977) 383–405. Nickelsburg claimed that the story of the Fallen Angels under Shemihaza's leadership built on Genesis 6:1–4 was in a later stage heavily influenced by the Prometheus-myth. Hanson argued for a development built on an ancient Semitic pattern of a "rebellion in heaven" myth (which also influenced the Greek sphere). The Asa'el story is built on *Leviticus* 16 and evolved out of the Shemihaza narrative. On the highly interesting methodological issues involved cf. Collins 1978, especially pp. 319f. and the responses of Hanson and Nickelsburg in the same volume: P.D. Hanson, "A Response to John Collins' 'Methodological Issues in the Study of I Enoch'" *SBL.SP* (1978) 307–309; G.W.E. Nickelsburg, "Reflections upon Reflections: A Response to John Collins' Methodological Issues in the Study of 1 Enoch" *SBL.SP* (1978) 311–314. See also the recent overviews by Vanderkam (1984:122–130) and E.J.C. Tigchelaar, *Prophets of Old and the Day of the End: Zechariah, the Book of Watchers and Apocalyptic*, (Oudtestamentische Studien 35; Leiden 1996), pp. 165–182.

[10] I do not think that the either-or approach is necessarily correct here. In other words, I do not think that an influence by the Prometheus-myth on the Shemihaza-stratum would make an influence by *Leviticus* 16 impossible, and vice versa (see below).

[11] Devora Dimant. *Mal'akhim sheKhatu' beMegilot Midbar Yehuda uvaSefarim haKhizonim haQrovim Lahen* (= *The Fallen Angels in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the related Apocryphes and Pseudepigrapha*) (unpublished dissertation, Jerusalem, 1974) (Hebrew). Her major insights on exactly our questions were published in the 1978 SBL lectures: "1 Enoch 6–11: A Methodological Perspective," *SBL.SP* (1978) 323–339. The article by Lester Grabbe ("The Scapegoat Tradition: A Study in Early Jewish Interpretation," *JSJ* 18 (1987) 152–167) was a very helpful guide in the investigation and served in many cases as example. He investigated the Az'azel-tradition, starting from *1 Enoch* and covering several texts of the Second Temple period and early Christianity, one of them being the Apocalypse of Abraham. Independently of both, Rubinciewicz proved in his *Habilitationsschrift* the influence of *Zechariah* 3 on the imagery of the Az'azel tradition in the Apocalypse of Abraham 13: *Die Eschatologie von Henoch 9–11 und das Neue Testament*, (Österreichische Biblische Studien 6; Wien, 1984; transl. from Polish) For a study on Azazel in the Christian tradition see my "Azazel in the Patristic Tradition" (paper given at the Fifth International Taubes Center Colloquium "Alternatives to Sacrifice" Neve-Ilan, February 15–18, 1999, forthcoming).

[12] *1 Enoch* 10:4–8 cited from the translation of Knibb. Apart from v. 4a and the last two words of v. 8 the text is extant only in Greek and Ethiopic and—as usual—the most interesting passages are not preserved in Aramaic.

> And further the Lord said to Raphael, Bind <Asa'el>[13] by his hands and his feet, and throw him into the darkness. And split open the desert which is in Dudael, and throw him there. And throw on him jagged and sharp stones and cover him with darkness; and let him stay there for ever, and cover his face, that he may not see light, and that on the great day of judgement he may be hurled into the fire. And restore the earth which the angels have ruined, and announce the restoration of the earth, for I shall restore the earth, so that not all the sons of men shall be destroyed through the mystery of everything which the Watchers made known[14] and taught to their sons. And the whole earth has been ruined by the teaching of the works of <Asa'el>, and against him write down all sin.[15]

The first point of relation between the temple ritual of Yom Kippur and *1 Enoch* 10 is the name of the Demon which sounds so similar to Az'azel, the scapegoat's destination. But this difference between Asa'el (עסאל/עשאל) and Az'azel (עזאזל) of *Leviticus* 16 is Nickelsburg's main argument against the influence of Yom Kippur on the Asa'el-stratum.[16] However, some fragments from Qumran (*4Q180, 4Q181, 4Q EnGiants*[a]) now provide evidence that the two demons were identified in the second century before the Common Era at the latest.[17] In addition to that, the redactor could have re-written the Asa'el story on the background of Yom Kippur and *Leviticus* 16 without changing the name of the demon to Az'azel because Asa'el was too well known as protagonist in the tradition. The elements of Yom Kippur are so numerous and central in this chapter that the Yom Kippur background could be recognized even without exact identity of the names.

The most important point of resemblance between Yom Kippur and *1 Enoch* 10 is the treatment of the goat and the punishment of the demon. Here one has to go beyond the biblical text and take later traditions of the scapegoat ritual into consideration, as they are reflected in texts of the Second Temple and Rabbinic periods.

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[13] Knibb translates "Azazel". The Greek version reads *Azaêl*. *4Q En*[a] reads עסאל.

[14] Cf. on this obvious emendation Black's commentary (1985).

[15] Literally "write on him down all sin".

[16] Nickelsburg 1977:401–404, especially fn. 83 p. 404.

[17] These fragments call the leader of the Fallen Angels Azaz'el (עזזאל). Jewish tradition often interpreted the masoretic Az'azel (עזאזל) as Azaz'el (עזזאל) (for passages cf. Dimant 1978:336 fn. 37). For the discussion of *4Q180* & *4Q181* & *4Q EnGiants*[a] cf. Milik 1972, Dimant 1974:153–158, 175f.; Grabbe 1987:155f. and Rubinkiewicz 1984:97–101.

According to the *Mishna* and the *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*, the scapegoat is brought to a cliff in the desert at a place called Beth Hadudi or Haduri and then thrown down the precipice.[18] Philo, too, is witness to this practice: the scapegoat "falls in rocky chasms in trackless and unhallowed regions".[19] In order to describe the chasms, Philo chose the rare word *barathra*, which is exactly the word used in Athens for the place from which people condemned to death were thrown in order to cleanse the society.[20] The procedure and its place is identical to the words the author of *1 Enoch* chose in order to describe Asa'el's destiny: "split open the desert which is in Dudael, and throw him (Asa'el) there." Moreover, both the scapegoat and the demon carry the sins.[21] In summary: Both the scapegoat and the demon are seen as vehicles of sin and are brought to the desert and thrown down a precipice.[22]

Third, the cathartic purpose is also identical. Earth or temple and people are purified and restored. Both the demon and the scapegoat carry away the sins, and the world becomes pure. To be sure,

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[18] *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan Leviticus* 16:10, 21b–22 in the translation of Michael Maher. *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, Translated with Notes*, in: Martin McNamara & Robert Hayward & Michael Maher (eds.) *The Aramaic Bible*, Vol. 3 (Edinburgh, 1994) (with the Aramaic taken from E.G. Clarke et al. *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan of the Pentateuch: Text and Concordance*, Hoboken (N.J.) 1984): "(10) The goat on which the lot for Azazel fell shall be set alive before the Lord to make atonement for the sinfulness of the people of the house of Israel, (and) to be sent to die in a rough and stony place (אחר חקיף וקשי) which is in the desert of Soq, that is Beth Haduri (בית הדורי) . . . (21b) And he <Aaron> shall let (it) <the scapegoat> go, in charge of a man who has been designated previously, to go to the desert of Soq, that is Beth Haduri. (22) The goat shall carry on himself all their sins to a desolate place (אחר צדיא); and the man shall let the goat go into the desert of Soq, and the goat shall go up on the mountains of Beth Haduri, and a blast of wind from before the Lord will thrust him down and he will die."

[19] *Eis de abata kai bebêla kai barathra empiptôn* (*De Plantatione* 61). Daniel Schwartz "Two Pauline Allusions to the Redemptive Mechanism of the Crucifixion," *JBL* 102 (1983) 259–268, (here: 262 note) drew my attention to the philonic passage and the misleading translation by Colson in LCL. On the element of ruggedness see below.

[20] Schwartz 1983:262.

[21] This is the literal meaning of the Greek of *1 Enoch* 10:8 "*ep' autôi grapson tas hamartias pasas.*" Comp. *Leviticus* 16:21 "putting them (the sins) upon the head of the goat" (ונתן אותם על ראש השעיר) and the Rabbinic description of the people's exclamations when the scapegoat is lead out of the town "Take and go! Take and go!" (טול וצא טול וצא) *Mishna Yoma* 6:4.

[22] Dimant recognized the weight of this argument not mentioned by Hanson: "in my judgment such an identification (of Asa'el and Az'azel) is already assumed in the adaption of the material in chap 10, where the punishments are commanded" (1978:327).

the eschatological Yom Kippur of *1 Enoch* is more radical, since it means the *absolute end* of the existence of sin and not a merely temporary cleansing.

Fourth, the name of the place of judgment (*Doudael/Dadouel*—בית הדורו) is conspicuously similar in both traditions and is likely to be traced to a common origin.[23]

Finally, the element of ruggedness which appears in *1 Enoch*, the *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* (צוק, אחר תקיף וקשי) and even in Philo *De Plantatione* 61 (*abata kai bebêla kai barathra*) could reflect an early midrash on the meaning of נזר (cut, split up) in ארץ נזרה (*Leviticus* 16:22) and, of course, of the historical chasm in the mountains of Jerusalem.[24]

In direct juxtaposition to the punishment of Asa'el, its twin story of the punishment of the second king of the demons, Shemihaza is told. The good Archangel Michael will bind Shemihaza until the final judgment, destroy all sin and inaugurate a blissful paradise.

> (20) And you, cleanse the earth from all wrong, and from all iniquity (*adikia*), and from all sin (*hamartia*), and from all impiety (*asebeia*), and from all the uncleanness which is brought about on the earth; remove them from the earth. (21) And all the sons of men shall be righteous, and all the nations shall serve and bless me, and all shall worship me. (22) And the earth will be cleansed from all corruption, and from all sin, and from all wrath, and from all torment; and I will not again send a flood upon it for all generations for ever. (*1 Enoch* 10:20–22)

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[23] For the interpretation of the similar names of the strange location *Dadouel/Doudael* in *1 Enoch* and the Rabbinic בית חדודו/הדורו/חרורו/הרודו/הרודי see already A. Geiger, "Zu den Apokryphen," *Jüdische Zeitschrift für Wissenschaft und Leben* 3 (1864), 196–204 (here: 200f.) and R.H. Charles, *The Book of Enoch or 1 Enoch, Translated from the Editor's Ethiopic Text*, (reprint Jerusalem 1973 = 1912). Cf. Milik's different explanations in *DJD* (1961) 2:111f. and 1976:29f.; and the responses of Hanson 1977:195–233; C. Molenberg, "A Study of the Roles of Shemihaza and Asael in 1 Enoch 6–11," *JJS* 35 (1984) 136–146; here: 143 fn. 34; Black 1985:134; Grabbe 1987:155 fn. 6. On the different spellings in the Mishna and the Talmudim cf. *Diqduqe Sofrim* 4:193f. and Yehoshua Rosenberg's critical edition of the Mishna tractate Yoma: *Mishna "Kippurim"—Mahadura Bikortit beTseruf Mavo*, 2 Vols.; unpublished dissertation; Jerusalem 1995, here vol. 1, p. 76.

Hanson's main argument seems to be a pun on פטר as Aramaic translation of שלח in Leviticus 16:22f. below the mysterious saying "open the desert" in *1 Enoch* 10:4. But Grabbe's long footnote (1987:154–155 fn. 6) is a quite definite response (unless we find the Aramaic of this verse).

[24] Cf. fn. 19 and 47. Compare *abata* with אהר צדיא in *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan Leviticus* 16:22. Another theory raised is a connection between בית חדודו coming from the root חדד (sharp, pointed) (Dimant 1978:327 and fn. 40, 41).

This narrative, too, has some connections to Yom Kippur. First, the day of Shemihaza's binding is called "the great day", one of the names of Yom Kippur in later tradition.[25] Most striking, however, is the choice of the different classifications for sin, which strongly resemble *Leviticus* 16:21, as has been independently noted by Rubinciewicz and by Nickelsburg himself.[26]

As in the previous myth the binding of the chief demon is depicted as the day of the total purification of the whole earth from the phenomenon "sin". Both the *beginning* and the predicted *end* of this history of sin become part of the *imaginaire* of Jewish apocalyptic streams. "Sin" entered via sexual abuse and evil instruction through the Fallen Angels and was eradicated through the radical purification of the eschatological Yom Kippur.

All the arguments listed above provide sufficient evidence for the conceptual and linguistic influence of the annual Yom Kippur on the myth of the eschatological Yom Kippur in *1 Enoch* 10.[27] Yet the relationship between myth and ritual, word and deed, is reciprocal: i.e., the myth also reveals information about the ritual: one can now imagine why, according to Rabbinic and early Christian sources, the people so harshly mistreated the scapegoat.[28] The annual Yom Kippur was perceived—as least by some—as a ritual anticipation of the eschatological purification of God's creation from sin. The goat originally sent *to* Az'azel was seen as the personification *of* Az'azel, the demonic source of sin *himself*.[29]

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[25] *4Q En Giants*[a] (Milik 1976:175–7) reads יומא רבא. Our Greek has no equivalent for רבא, but *megalês hêmeras* appears in the citation of *1 Enoch* 10:6 in Jud 6. On Jewish tradition comp. Babylonian Talmud (RH 21a). For early Christian references cf. Gedalyahu Alon "haHalakha beIggeret Bar Naba" (The Halakha in the Barnabas-Letter) in: idem *Mekhqarim beToledot Israel (= Studies in Jewish History)* 2 Vols. (HaKibbuz HaMeukhad, 1967) (Hebrew). He refers to Clemens Alexandrinus *Stromateis* 6:5 and 41:1 (Vol. 1, p. 303 fn. 17) (his nice Hebrew article about the Halakha in Pseudo-Barnabas was unfortunately not included in the English translation of his collected essays).

[26] Rubinkiewicz 1984:88f.; Nickelsburg 1977:403. The Hebrew *Leviticus* 16:21 1) פשע; 2) חטא; 3) עון is translated by the LXX with 1) *adikia*; 2) *hamartia*; 3) *anomia*. *1 Enoch* reads slightly different: 1) *adikia*; 2) *hamartia*; 3) *asebeia*. However, the LXX translates עון not only as *anomia* but also as *asebeia* (*Ezechiel* 33:9; *Psalm* 31 (32):5).

[27] Nickelsburg could more easily refute Hanson' arguments, partly because Hanson built his thesis on the correspondences between *1 Enoch* and *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*, only, and did not use other sources, from the Second Temple (Philo!) or the Rabbinic period.

[28] *Pseudo-Barnabas* 7:8 and *Mishna Yoma* 6:4.

[29] Hanson argues for a sectarian origin of *1 Enoch* 10:4–8 of a group opposing

It is difficult to overestimate the influence of the myth of the punishment of the Fallen Angels (*1 Enoch* 10) on later generations.[30] There are traces in a number of texts, from *Jubilees* to the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs* to *Jude*, in *11QMelkizedeq* and in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*.[31] I will now discuss the two latter texts, which both show further connections to Yom Kippur.

Part Two: A Different Priesthood: 11QMelkizedeq *and* Hebrews

In this part I will examine *11QMelkizedeq*, which has some special features in common with *Hebrews*, pointing to a shared *imaginaire* as origin. *11QMelkizedeq* is among the most famous fragments found at Qumran. The exact age of composition is unknown. The paleographical data point to the first century before the Common Era as *terminus ad quem*.[32]

The preserved parts of the account are similar to the myth of the eschatological punishment of Shemihaza by Michael.[33] The heavenly/godly[34] figure Melkizedeq liberates the prisoners of Belial, the leader of the evil forces.[35] In the judgment which follows Melkizedeq rewards his fellows by expiating their sins and takes revenge on the followers of Belial.[36] All this takes place on the first day of the tenth Jubilee,[37]

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the Temple, because "the normal means provided by the Temple cult for dealing with defilements is implicitely judged ineffectual" (1977:226). In my opinion, the myth is not arguing against the Temple, but illustrating the yearly cult as pre-enactment of the final eschatological decision.

[30] The history of this myth has been investigated in the (unpublished) dissertation of Devorah Dimant (1974, Hebrew).

[31] Cf. for example Rubinkiewicz for the *Apocalypse of Abraham* (1984:52–55). On the relation to *11QMelkizedeq* cf. Grabbe 1987:160f. and J.T. Milik, "Milki-sedeq et Milki-resa' dans les anciens écrits juifs et chrétiens," *JSJ* 23 (1972) 95–144.

[32] Latest, however, speculatively emendated edition of the text in Emile Puech "Notes sur le Manuscrit de XIQMelkisedeq," *RQ* 48 (1987) 483–513. His bibliography refers to all previous editions and studies. The best study is still P.J. Kobelski *Melchizedek and Melchireša*, (CBQ.MS 10; Washington 1981); compare also F.L. Horton, *The Melchizedek Tradition: A Critical Examination of the Sources to the Fifth Century A.D. and in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, (SNTSMS 30; Cambridge 1976). Anders Aschim (Oslo) is working on a new establishment of facts. For the dating see Puech 1987:508.

[33] For this observation see Grabbe 1987:161.

[34] *11QMelkizedeq* 2:10.16.24f. calls Melkizedeq אלהים. Comp. *theos* in *Hebrews* 1:8.

[35] *11QMelkizedeq* 2:2–6.

[36] *11QMelkizedeq* 2:7f.13.

[37] *11QMelkizedeq* 2:7.

which means—Yom Kippur.[38] If Melkizedeq purifies his people on Yom Kippur he is clearly a high priestly figure, though the remaining fragments are not explicit about this.[39]

But the proximity to the myth of the Fallen Angels as told in *1 Enoch* 10 is only one side of the coin. Naturally, the focus of interest by New Testament scholars has been the exact relationship between *11QMelkizedeq* and *Hebrews*. Especially the idea of Jesus' priesthood according to the order of Melkizedeq often has been subject of investigation. Kobelski established these points of contact: first, the redemption takes place in the Eschaton and is called "rest"; second, both redeemers are heavenly, even divine, and both not only liberate but also atone.[40] In addition, both redeemer figures share the fact of being priest *and king*.

The exact character of the relationship between *11QMelkizedeq* and *Hebrews* remains a matter of debate. However, if Melkizedeq could play such prominent a role in so similar a story we have to assume, that the author of *Hebrews* knew some similar traditions to *11QMelkizedeq* and probably even corrected them by superimposing Jesus over Melkizedeq. It is obvious that the basic grid of the myth from *Hebrews* resembles closely the apocalyptic theology of *11QMelkizedeq*. While a *direct* relationship cannot been proven, it is clear that both texts derive from a common *imaginaire*—one that longed for of an eschatological Yom Kippur, when a high priestly figure would liberate his followers, atone for their sins and destroy the Devil.

Part Three: The Apocalypse of Abraham *and the Roots of the High Priest Christology*

The *Apocalypse of Abraham* has been dated to the end of the first or the beginning of the second century of the Common Era, contemporaneous to the later writings of the New Testament.[41] Its original

[38] *Leviticus* 25:9.

[39] Puech 1987:512. Melkizedeq's priestly function is supported by other texts as *4Q401* and the analogies to Archangel Michael as highpriest in general (cf. Puech 1987:311f.).

[40] Kobelski 1981:128. His list omits the parallel, that the eschatological redemption takes place on Yom Kippur, though this fact is known to him (1981:138f.). However, he does not recognize the priestly character of Melkizedeq.

[41] I used the two editions by R. Rubinkiewicz, "The Apocalypse of Abraham,"

language was Semitic, i.e. Hebrew or Aramaic, though it has come into our hands only in a Slavonic translation. Its second part describes the vision of Abraham during his sacrifice, as told in *Genesis* 15. Before he sets out to travel the heavens a bird lands on the halved animal carcasses and tries talking to Abraham.[42]

> (13:6) And it came to pass when I saw the bird speaking I said this to the angel: "What is this, my lord?" And he said, "This is disgrace,[43] this is Azazel!". (7) And he said to him, "Shame on you, Azazel![44] For Abraham's portion[45] is in heaven, and yours is on earth, (8) for you have selected here, (and) become enamored of the dwelling place of your blemish. Therefore the Eternal Ruler, the Mighty One, has given you a dwelling on earth. (9) Through you the all-evil spirit (is) a liar, and through you (are) wrath and trials on the generations of men who live impiously. (10) For the Eternal, Mighty One did not allow the bodies of the righteous to be in your hand, so through them the righteous life is affirmed and the destruction of ungodliness. (11) Hear, counselor, be shamed by me! you have no permission to tempt all the righteous. (12) Depart from this man! (13) You cannot deceive him, because he is the enemy of you and of those who follow you and who love what you wish. (14) For behold, the garment which in heaven was formerly yours has been set aside for him, and the corruption[46] which was on him has gone over to you."[47]

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in: Charlesworth (1983: 1:681–705) and *L'Apocalypse d'Abraham en vieux slave: Introduction, texte critique, traduction et commentaire*, (Zródla i monografie 129; Lublin, 1987) and compared always to the translations by Philonenko-Sayar in the French (Belkis Philonenko-Sayar, & Marc Philonenko, "Apocalypse d'Abraham," in: André Dupont-Sommer & Marc Philonenko, *La Bible: Ecrits Intertestamentaires*, [Paris 1987; pp. 1691–1730]) and German series (Belkis Philonenko-Sayar & Marc Philonenko, *Die Apocalypse Abrahams*, [JSHRZ 5:5; Tübingen 1982]).

On the dating see Rubinkiewicz 1983:683. His evidence for an even more exact dating (between 79 and 81 C.E.) is not convincing (1987:75).

[42] Cited from the translation of Rubinciewicz 1983).

[43] Rubinkiewicz's Greek reconstruction is *asebeia*. In his French translation Rubinkiewicz reads *iniquité*. He postulates מרמה or רשע as original Hebrew reading (1987: 143–147). Philonenko-Sayar's French translation reads *impiété* and her German version reads *Gottlosigkeit*.

[44] Rubinkiewicz suggests ינער בך as original reading, the same reading as *Zechariah* 3:2; comp. *Judas* 9.

[45] In his French translation Rubinkiewicz reads "car la gloire d'Abraham est dans le ciel et ta gloire est sur la terre." He postulates כבוד as original reading. Philonenko reads *lot* and *Los*.

[46] The Greek reads *fthora*, in his French translation Rubinkiewicz uses *péché*, while Philonenko-Sayar choose *pourriture* and *Verwesung*. The Hebrew equivalent suggested by Rubinkiewicz (בחת) is definitely misspelled and probably should be read as שחת (cf. Psalm 102 (103):4; Jona 2:7).

[47] Compare also the sentence in the following chapter ("Go, Azazel, into the *untrodden parts* of the earth." [14:6]) which is very close to the expression chosen by

In the name of the chief of the demons, Azazel, we immediately recognize the influence of the demonology of *1 Enoch*. Apart from the influence of the apocalyptic myth on the eschatological Yom Kippur another biblical text has been a source of imagination, *Zechariah* 3, as has been shown by Rubinciewicz:[48]

> (3:1) And he showed me Joshua (יהושע/*Iêsous*) the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. (2) And the LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, O Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you (יגער בך/*epitimêsai en soi*)! Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?" (3) Now Joshua was standing before the angel, clothed with filthy garments. (4) And the angel said to those who were standing before him, "Remove the filthy garments from him." And to him he said, "Behold I have taken your iniquity (עונך/*tas anomias sou*) away from, and I will clothe you with rich apparel (מחלצות/*podêrê*)." (5) And I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head, and clothed him with garments; and the angel of the LORD was standing by. (6) And the angel of the LORD enjoined Joshua (7) "Thus says the LORD of hosts: If you will walk in my ways and keep my charge, then you shall rule my house, and have charge of my courts, and I will give you the right of access among those who are standing here. (8) Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who sit before you; for they are men of good omen: behold, I will bring my servant the Branch. (9) For behold, upon the stone which I have set before Joshua, upon a single stone with seven facets, I will engrave its inscription, says the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the guilt of this land in a single day. (10) In that day, says the LORD of hosts, every one of you will invite his neighbor under his vine and under his fig tree." (Cited according to the Revised Standard Version)

The following features of *Zechariah* 3 resemble "Yom Kippuric" images. The high priest, who is standing before God, his sordid clothes reflecting his (or his peoples) sins, the acquittal symbolized by the changing into clean vestments, including the purification of his person. It could be the picture of a high priest who at the end of Yom Kippur changes his linen vestments which have become stained with

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Philo in his description of Yom Kippur: "*atribê kai abaton erêmian*" (*De Specialibus Legibus* 1:188).

[48] Rubinkiewicz 1984:101f. & 110–113. Unfortunately the newest discussion on the relationship of *Zechariah* and *1 Enoch* by Tigchelaar (1996) does not refer to the work of Rubinkiewicz though the bibliography edited by him and by Garcia-Martinez lists it ("1 Enoch and the Figure of Enoch: A Bibliography of Studies 1970–1988" *RQ* 53/14 (1989) 149–174).

blood from slaughtering and blood sprinkling. Only a few modern commentaries, for example that of Robert Hanhart, mention the similarity to Yom Kippur; however, most of them emphasize the differences in the two situations and discard any relationship.[49] For my purpose this modern debate is irrelevant, as Rubinkiewicz's analysis of the *Apocalypse of Abraham* has proven that in the *ancient* Jewish apocalyptic *imaginaire* *Zechariah* 3 could in fact be connected to the Az'azel-tradition of Yom Kippur.

Rubinkiewicz suggested that the following elements of *Zechariah* 3 can be found in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*: First, the basic scene in the two texts is very similar. A single human being stands before two angels, a good defender and a satanic accuser. Second, the good angel rebukes the bad one.[50] The most important common element consists in the central act, the change of garments connected to the change from an impure to a pure state. The *Apocalypse of Abraham* enforces the Yom Kippur imagery in this motif by mixing it with the scapegoat ritual. The high priest does not simply put his unclean clothes *aside*; as in *Zechariah* 3 or in *Leviticus* 16, his corruption is *put on Azazel*. Since Azazel is identified as the true cause of all evil, his suffering is not vicarious but justified. Not the single sinner is punished, but "sin" *per se*. As in *1 Enoch*, the origin of sin has become its final point of destination.

Thus, compared to *1 Enoch* the *Apocalypse of Abraham* is an even more striking example of the mythopoeic power of Yom Kippur in the Jewish-apocalyptic *imaginaire*, since it not only uses *Leviticus* 16 for its Yom Kippur imagery but also applies a scene of *Zechariah* 3, a scene that has *some* affinities to Yom Kippur but is not explicit about that. One might therefore say that the centrality of Yom Kippur in the *imaginaire* behind the *Apocalypse of Abraham* is so strong that, like a magnet, it may even attract other scenes to the apocalyptical myth, which originally were not necessarily connected to Yom Kippur, and in order to integrate it, transforms their images into a Yom Kippur scene.

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[49] R. Hanhart, *Sacharja*, (Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament 14:7; Neukirchen 1992–1998), here: 184–189. Cf. also H. Blocher, "Zacharie 3: Josué et le grand jour des expiations," *Etudes Théologiques et Religieuses* 54 (1979) 264–270.

[50] Rubinkiewicz goes so far as to assume behind the extant Slavonic "ינער בך", the same Hebrew wording as in *Zechariah* 3.

Part Four: The Apocalyptic imaginaire *of Yom Kippur and Christ as a High Priest*

In this part, I will apply the conception of Yom Kippur in the apocalyptic *imaginaire* around the Christian conception of Yom Kippur and its importance for the development of the high priest Christology.

The most influential early Christian text about Yom Kippur is the anonymous *Letter to the Hebrews* dating from the second half of the first century C.E.[51] According to its description Good Friday was the beginning of an eschatological Yom Kippur, with Jesus once and for all time ministering simultaneously as high priest *and* sacrifice in the heavenly holy of holies. Thereby he cleansed all the sins of those who believe in his ministry and defeated the origin of death, the devil.

Hebrews is the earliest text mentioning Christ as a priestly Messiah. However, this idea is introduced suddenly, in 2:17f.—a sign that the tradition was already well known to the readers and did not need any explanation.[52] Furthermore, some texts from the early second century mention Jesus as high priest independently of *Hebrews*—another indication that the high priest messianology was traditional before and independent of *Hebrews*.[53]

Loader suggested in his brilliant dissertation *Sohn und Hoherpriester*, which has become the standard opus on Christ's high priesthood, that the high priesthood of Jesus derived from the image of the interceding *Tsaddik* (Just One). He claims, that the imagery of Yom

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[51] Cf. H.W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, (Hermeneia; Philadelphia 1989). For our argument it is less important if we date *Hebrews* before or after the destruction of the Temple. In my opinion the *argumentum ex silentio*, the complete silence about the destruction makes any late dating highly improbable, especially considering that the obsolescence of the Temple is one of the letters main points—it is hard to understand why the author should have omitted his best argument.

Other texts are the *Letter to the Romans* 3:25 and *Pseudo-Barnabas* 7. In my M.A.-thesis I also accepted the arguments of Schwartz (1983) for a Yom Kippur background in the *Letter to the Galatians* 3f. and argued for the influence of the scapegoat ritual on the Matthean Barrabas episode.

[52] Some scholars have tried to find other allusions to traces of an early doctrine of Jesus as high priest in the New Testament, especially in *the Gospel of John*. The most recent attempt known to me is by J.P. Heil, "Jesus as the Unique High Priest in the Gospel of John," *CBQ* 57 (1995) 729–745.

[53] *Letter of Ignatius to the Philadelphians* 9:1; *Letter of Polycarp to the Philippians* 12:2; *Martyrium of Polycarp* 14:3. *1 Letter of Clement* 36 is dependent on *Hebrews* but 61:3 and 64 are "feste liturgische Formulierungen" which cannot be traced back to *Hebrews* (W.R.G. Loader, *Sohn und Hoherpriester*, (WMANT 53; Neukirchen, 1981), here: p. 237).

Kippur served only as a (late) frame for the different traditions.[54] *Contra* his theory I would like to show that the depiction of an eschatological Yom Kippur and a high priestly redeemer is a quite traditional moment in Jewish apocalyptic myths and should rather be considered as the *root* of Christ's high priesthood.

In order to show this, I will take a step further back, into early Christian thought *before* the *Letter to the Hebrews*. In this stage the concept of high priesthood was not yet connected to the *specialissima* of *Hebrews* (the high priest sacrificing himself; and the priesthood according to the order of Melkizedeq). Christ was already revered as a high priest, but not according to the order of Melkizedeq and not as bringing his own blood into the adytum—otherwise the author of *Hebrews* would not have had to explain these ideas in such a detailed way—they are new to his readers.

According to Jewish law, priests, and even more the high priests, had to be from the tribe of Levi. As the author of *Hebrews* himself reveals, the obligatory Levitical origin of priests must have been a serious problem for the first disciples of Jesus, since it was already well established that Jesus the son of Josef was not from a Levitical tribe but from Judah! This may have made him very eligible to become a kingly messiah but virtually nullified his chances as a priestly messiah.

The author of *Hebrews* solved this problem by introducing an alternative but older and superior priesthood according to the order of Melkizedeq. But, if the high priesthood of Jesus has been traditional *before Hebrews*, how did those first disciples who came up with this idea justify it? Or: If the idea of introducing a non-Levitical high priesthood according to the order of Melkizedeq is a *novum* for the Christian mind, how did those first disciples reconcile Christ as (high-) priest with the Scriptures? To my knowledge no one so far has asked this question.

Technically there were some exegetical possibilities for overcoming this obstacle:

a) *The de-Levitisation of the priesthood*--to change the Levitical constitution of the priesthood and formulate a different basis. This was the solution of *Hebrews* and represents a verly early but, as we have seen, secondary stage -otherwise the author would not have

[54] Loader 1981. Compare the excursus in Attridge 1989:97-103.

had to waste so many words on the midrash on Melkizedeq.[55]

b) *The "Levitisation" of Jesus*—to change Jesus' origin and forge a Levitical pedigree. This solution appears in the late second century.[56]

To these two solutions I suggest adding a third one, which, in my opinion was also the earliest:

c) *The typologisation of a precedent of a high priestly Jesus*—to claim that a Jesus being high priest was nothing new, by finding a "historical" precedent in the Bible.

The Book of *Zechariah* is the earliest source we have for the idea of a priestly messiah. In the eyes of the disciples of Jesus in the first generation it must have been very symbolical, that this high priest was a namesake of their master.[57]

It is true that in the first centuries of the Common Era the name Jesus/Joshua/Yeshu(a) was very common, however not in the source for any typology—the Bible. The only "active" figures in the Hebrew Bible named Jesus are Jesus/Josua ben Nun and Jesus/Josua ben Jozedeq.[58] While the typological importance of Jesus/Josua ben Nun has long been recognized, scholars usually postponed the typologi-

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[55] Might it be possible that the problem was similar for the group around *11QMelkizedeq?* This question was raised in the discussion by Prof. Albert Baumgarten.

[56] Cf. M. de Jonge "Hippolytus' <Benedictions of Isaac, Jacob and Moses> and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs>" *Bijdragen* 46 (1985) 245–260, especially 257–260. Cf. H.W. Hollander, & M. De Jonge, *The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, (Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha 8; Leiden 1985), here: pp. 77–78, 126, who refer to a fragment ascribed to Irenaeus (Harvey 2:487 fragm 17) and Hippolytus' *Commentary on the Blessings of Isaac, Jacob* 12:122; 15:177–184 (Maurice Brière & Louis Mariès & B.-Ch. Mercier, *Hippolyte de Rome sur les bénédictions d'Isaac, de Jacob et de Moise: Sur le bénédictions d'Isaac et de Jacob: texte grec; versions arménienne et géorgienne, sur les bénédictions de Moise: versions arménienne et géorgienne, traductions francaise résultante et notes*, [Patrologia Orientalis 27:1–2; Paris 1954] here: pp. 52–53, 72–75) and his *Commentary on the Blessings of Mose* Deuteronomium 27:12; 33:8–11 (Brière/Mariès/Mercier 1954:126, 145) and his *Commentary on Daniel* 1:12 (G. Nath. Bonwetsch & Hans Achelis, *Die Kommentare zu Daniel und zum Hohenliede (von Hippolytus)*, [GCS 1:1; Leipzig 1897] here: p. 21).

[57] Because the New Testament *Iêsous* does not differ from the LXX, while in Hebrew the old יהושע changed to ישו/ישוע, this association was even more obvious in Greek than in Hebrew. However, I do not think that we have to suppose an origin in Hellenist circles, since the connection is close enough even in Hebrew.

[58] Apart from these there are two very minor figures who are named ישוע/יהושע/*Iêsous*. A chief in *2 Kings* 23:8 (יהושע/*Iêsous*) and an otherwise unknown Levite in the lists of *Esra* 2:6 and *Nehemia* 7:11 (ישוע/*Iêsous*). Neither plays any part in the narrative. Another stagehand is named יהושע בית השמשי (*1 Samuel* 6:14.18), but the LXX transliterated him not as *Iêsous* but as *Hôsêe*. Finally, one of the priestly watches is called ישוע/*Iêsous* (*1 Chronicles* 24:11; *2 Chronicles* 31:15). However, though the

cal importance of Jesus ben Jozedeq to the earliest *explicit* mentions in the second and third century of the Common Era by Justin Martyr and Tertullian.[59]

In my opinion there are several reasons to see in *Zechariah* 3 and its affinity to the Jewish apocalyptic *imaginaire* of Yom Kippur the typological root of Christ's high priesthood.

First, the later authors particularly like to cite from the third chapter, though there were other suitable passages with Jesus ben Jozedeq.[60] Furthermore, in Justin it appears in close juxtaposition to a Yom Kippur typology; in Tertullian in direct juxtaposition.

Second and even more important, we find an allusion to *Zechariah* 3 in *Pseudo-Barnabas*.[61] This early allusion appears in a typology of Yom Kippur, too. Its tradition consists of material considered to be older than *Pseudo-Barnabas* itself, dating probably even to the time of the Second Temple.

Third and most important, *Apocalypse of John* 1:13, the *only* New Testament verse apart from *Hebrews* which is universally accepted as referring to the high priesthood of Jesus alludes to *Zechariah* 3.[62]

These three points make it very probable that the high priest Christology prior to and independent of *Hebrews* used Jesus ben Jozedeq as a type for Jesus of Nazareth.

This probability becomes even more likely when we include in this list of arguments, that in the Jewish-apocalyptic *imaginaire*—*apart* from the circle of Jesus' followers—the whole scene of *Zechariah* 3

Levite and the priestly watch are connected to Levi, there is no possibility for any typology on any of them. Also Jesus Sirach's book of wisdom is not as useful as prophetic type as is *Zechariah*. Therefore, any typological connection is attributable only to the main characters Jesus ben Jozedeq or Jesus ben Nun.

[59] Cf. Joseph Lecuyer, "Jésus, fils de Josédec, et le Sacerdoce du Christ," *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 43 (1955), 82–103; Chan-Kok Wong, *The Interpretation of Zechariah 3,4 and 6 in the New Testament and Early Christianity*, (unpubl. diss.; Westminster Theological Seminary 1992). The only exception known to me is (bishop) F.C. Synge, *Hebrews and the Scriptures*, (London, 1959, here: pp. 19–21), who points out that both "high priests" built a Temple, that both were put to shame and that both were honoured by God.

[60] *Haggai* 1–2 and—less useful for typologies *Esra* 3–5.

[61] *Pseudo-Barnabas* 7:9 mentions the very rare word *podêrê* which always means the high priestly robe of Yom Kippur. The same is true for *Apocalypse of John* 1:13. For the connection between *podêrê* in *Pseudo-Barnabas* and in *Zechariah* cf. for example James Carleton Paget, *The Epistle of Barnabas: Outlook and Background*, (WUNT 2:64; Tübingen 1994), p. 140.

[62] Jesus is depicted as high priest in the *podêrê* and in the *zônin chrusan*. The background to this verse is rather complex, and in addition to *Zechariah* 3, *Esra* 8:2; 9:2 and *Daniel* 10:5 are also usually referred to.

was closely associated with Yom Kippur and the concept of an eschatological purification of the creation by a redeemer.

Consequently, it seems more than justified to assume that Yom Kippur, viz. the apocalyptical myth of an eschatological purification, was the *root* from which the high priest Christology sprang, not its *framework.*

Conclusions

The following conclusions can be drawn:

First, the temple ritual of Yom Kippur, especially the scapegoat-ritual had become a very important mythopoeic source of inspiration in the apocalyptic imagining of the eschatological victory over the power of sin and evil.

Second, *Hebrews* describes an eschatological Yom Kippur deriving from the same *imaginaire* as *11QMelkizedek.*

Third, in this *imaginaire* the changing of clothes in *Zechariah* 3 was closely connected to Yom Kippur, as was seen in the interpretation of the *Apocalypse of Abraham.*

Fourth, the Christian concept of Christ as a high priest can be derived convincingly from this apocalyptic *imaginaire* of an eschatological purification which applies images of Yom Kippur that include those of *Zechariah* 3 and its high priest Josua/Jesus ben Jozedeq.[63]

The difference between the Jewish-apocalyptic and the early Christian concept of Yom Kippur is, of course, that for the former the Yom Kippur typology points to a future event, one that has not yet begun, while for the latter the eschatological Yom Kippur started on Good Friday, about two thousand years ago.

[63] As a concluding note a remark about the usefulness of the *imaginaire.* In the beginning I did *not* know that in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* there was an extant (Jewish) text connecting *Zechariah* 3 to Yom Kippur. However, even then I thought that the high priesthood of Jesus was based on the *imaginaire* of Yom Kippur and that the justification for this was to be looked for in an association of *Zechariah* 3 to Yom Kippur. The existence of such a connection in a Jewish text seems to make the term *imaginaire* superfluous for readers used to philological argumentations. But the value of scientific theories is based on making correct predictions. The reputation of the *imaginaire* was therefore enhanced.

THE SEAT OF SIN IN EARLY JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN SOURCES

SERGE RUZER

1

The emphasis on the intention of the heart (and not only on deeds) as transmitted by the Synoptic Gospels is considered to be an outstanding feature of Jesus' preaching. The heart is sometimes presented in the Synoptic Gospels as the true source of sin, e.g. Mt 15:17–19. In the Sermon on the Mount, both the attention paid to what is happenning in man's inner soul (". . . . whosoever is angry with his brother . . .")[1] and the emphasis on love as the central imperative of the God's law point in the same direction. But, in the same Sermon on the Mount we find a statement of quite a different kind:

> If your right eye causes you to sin (*skandalizei*), tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell (*gehenna*). And if your right hand causes you to sin (*skandalizei*), cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to go into hell (*gehenna*). (Mt 5:29–30).[2]

The opposition between those two existential impetuses, the heart and the limbs as the seat of sin, remains unresolved in the Gospel text, causing discomfort for exegetes. Modern commentaries amptly demonstrate the exegetical tension between locating sin in the heart or the limbs there. While the Anchor Bible commentary allows for the sinful potential of limbs as agents of "known occasions of sin," such as lustful sights or physical contacts,[3] *The International Critical Commentary* dismiss the "cutting sinful limbs off" as an allegory, stating

[1] Mt 5:22. See S. Ruzer, "The Technique of Composite Quotation in the Sermon on the Mount," *Revue Biblique* 1996/1, 65–75.

[2] Cf. Mt 18:8, Mk 9:43, 45, Lk 17:1. For a possible relationships between the Synoptics here, see W.F. Albright and C.S. Mann, *Matthew* (Anchor Bible; New York: Doubleday, 1971), 217. Throughout this paper the English quotations from the New Testament are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

[3] See W.F. Albright and C.S. Mann, *Matthew*, 63.

with unreserved confidence that: "Jesus and the NT writers knew well enough that amputation would scarcely curb the passions since the problem is not with the body itself but, as Paul put it, with 'sin that dwells in me' (Rom 7:17,20). . . . The lustful eye is not to be mutilated but brought into custody."[4] In contradistinction, McKenzie in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary* claims not less forcefully: "The restatement of the Law [here] is directed at the roots of the impulse. . . . The fact that the saying is couched in a rather intense hyperbole does not entitle interpreters to reduce it to a vague form of spiritual detachment."[5]

That opposition between presenting the heart as the source of sin and blaming bodily limbs, discerned both within the Gospel account and in attempts at its interpretation, triggered the present examination of the seat of sin in early Jewish sources. This examination will explore to what extent this opposition is an inherited one: is the opposition between heart and limbs intrinsic to Jewish traditions from the Second Temple period dealing with the question of the seat of sin? What opinions are attested in those traditions concerning the source of sin? Do sins begin in the heart (often synonymous in this context with person's soul),[6] in some particularily treacherous bodily limbs, or is the source of transgression external both to soul and body? A distinction must be made between two different, though interconnected, motifs, namely, *bodily limbs as an impetus* in man's

[4] W.D. Davies and D.C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Gospel According to Saint Matthew* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), vol. 1, 524. On this occasion Origen is quoted by the ICC compilers as one who wrote (in *Comm. on Mt* 15:4), that the Christian "amputates the passions of the soul without touching the body" ("*ektemnoi to tes psyches pathetikon, me haptomenos tou somatos*"). See Origen, *Opera omnia* (Berolini, 1834), vol. 3, 334.

[5] The last statement refers to a parallel saying in Mt 18:9. See J.L. McKenzie, "The Gospel According to Matthew," in: R.E. Brown, J.A. Fitzmyer and R.E. Murphy (eds.), *The Jerome Biblical Commentary* (London: Chapman, 1968), vol. 2, 72, 94. In the new edition of the same commentary a different appreciation of Mt 5:29–30 is expressed. B.T. Viviano ("Matthew," in: R.E. Brown, J.A. Fitzmyer and R.E. Murphy (eds.), *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* [Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: A Paramount Communication Company, 1990], 642) writes: "These verses parallel Mark 9:43–47 but are omitted by Luke, probably because of the Oriental hyperbolic mode in which they are expressed. The point is that Jesus calls for a radical ordering of priorities. The logic of one's decisions and moral choices is important. It is better to sacrifice a part of one's moral freedom than to loose the whole."

[6] So it seems to have been understood in the Bible, see S. Schechter, *Aspects of Rabbinic Theology* (New York: Schoken Books, 1961), 260.

inclination and the *post factum punishment of guilty limbs.*[7] It is clear that the Sermon on the Mount addresses the preventive "cutting" of the limbs—to curb the evil inclination—rather than the punishment of guilty limbs; present discussion will also focus on the motif of bodily limbs as existential impetuses.

2

In this paper I will first review in brief the main trends regarding the seat of sin attested in Jewish sources from the Second Temple period and their developments in later Rabbinic literature.[8] Among other trends, a gradual suppression of the bodily limbs responsibility for transgression will be discussed. Further on, I will return to the New Testament and demonstrate that the Synoptic and Pauline treatment of the seat of sin both bear testimony to an early stage of those Rabbinic developments. And finally, I will refer to some further developments in Christian thought after Paul.[9]

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[7] The punishment may befall the limbs either in this world or in Gehenna. For a thorough examination of the last scenario, see S. Lieberman, "On Sins and Their Punishment," in: *Studies in Palestinian Talmudic Literature* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1991) (Hebrew), 70–89.

[8] Systematic study of the influence of wider hellenistic milieu on the Jewish ideas regarding the seat of sin will have to wait for another occasion.

[9] To offer a clearer picture of post-Pauline tendencies concerning the seat of sin one would have to examine Christian sources from the second to fourth centuries. An attempt should be made to find out to what extent the solutions offered for the problem in Early Christianity—after the ties with Judaism had been severed—were influenced by the particular belief in Messiah's expiating death and resurrection. Another possibility must also be checked, namely, that some older or more general lines of reasoning were adopted for that end. The question of possible mutual influences between Jewish and Christian authors during this period should be addressed, a question that will not necessarily receive a definitive answer. For an evaluation of the possibility of this kind of influence, see G. Stemberger, "Exegetical Contacts between Christians and Jews," in: M. Saebo (ed.), *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation*, vol. I (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 571–586. J. Neusner is usually advocating the most pessimistic view regarding the possibility of those contacts. See, for instance, J. Neusner, *Aphrahat and Judaism. The Christian-Jewish Argument in Fourth-Century Iran* (Studia Post-Biblica 19; Leiden: Brill, 1971), 187. The possibility of influence of the shared general [Greco-Roman] milieu, rather than reciprocal contacts between Judaism and Christianity, should also be taken into consideration. See, for example, B.L. Visotzky, *Fathers of the World* (Tubingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1995), 9.

3

I will start the review of the trends regarding the seat of sin with the approach according to which the human heart (human soul)[10] is responsible for sinful inclinations. This heart-centered approach is felt by some scholars to be the dominant one in the Jewish thought of late antiquity: it is described by Schechter as the true representative of Rabbinic theology.[11] This impetus of sin is attested already in the Bible, often being combined with the notion of the "change of the heart" or turning away from sin.[12] In Rabbinic literature this heart-impetus or intuition finds its classical, if relatively late, expression in *Pesikta de Rab Kahana*:[13]

> The heart sees, the heart hears, the heart speaks, the heart walks, the heart falls,. . . . the heart is tried, the heart rebels,. . . . the heart whispers,. . . . the heart desires, the heart commits adultery,. . . . the heart is stolen,. . . . the heart goes astray,. . . . the heart hates, the heart is jealous,. . . . the heart covets,. . . . the heart is deceitful, the heart schemes,. . . . the heart is arrogant.

We shall see later that seeing, hearing, speaking and walking feature prominently in early descriptions of the physical actions of the serpent and Eve that led to the fall. With those descriptions in mind, one may discern in this section from *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* a polemical note arguing the heart to be the only true reason for a person's sins.[14] This heart-intuition is often formulated in Rabbinic literature in terms of the Evil Inclination and is usually combined with an additional notion of the Good Inclination also dwelling in the heart. This construction is already found in early strata of Rabbinic literature,[15]

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[10] See note 6 above.

[11] S. Schechter, *Aspects*. . ., 243, 255. See also F.Ch. Porter, "The Yecer Hara. A Study in the Jewish Doctrine of Sin," in: *Biblical and Semitic Studies* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), 110, 116, 132–133.

[12] E.g. Ezek 18:31; 36:26–27; Ps 51:12. In all these instances the "change of the heart" is coupled with receiving the *new spirit*. See *Le Dictionaire de spiritualite* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1953), vol. 2, 1046.

[13] *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 124a and b (ed. Buber). See Schechter, *Aspects*. . ., 255–256, n. 2.

[14] See also *b. Nedarim* 32b, where bodily limbs are presented as succumbing to the siege laid by the Evil Inclination (on the heart).

[15] See, for example, *m. Ber.* 9,5; *Sifre* 73a; *Abot R. Nat.* 47a; *b. Ber.* 61b. A parallel (and a later) notion of two hearts is also attested where each heart is a seat of one Inclination. In contradistinction to humans, angels have one heart only, and the Israelites will attain this in the Messianic times. See *b. Meg.* 14a; *Gen. R.* 48,

which suggests that the double notion of the Good/Evil Inclination was known already in the Tannaitic period.

As Schechter noted, however, the term Evil Inclination (*yetzer ha-ra*) suggested by Gen 6:5; 8:21, seems to have been coined at an earlier stage, while the Good Inclination (*yetzer ha-tov*) notion developed later forming together with *yetzer ha-ra* the dialectical heart-notion.[16] It seems highly possible that the term *yetzer ha-ra* pre-dates the New Testament.[17]

Within this general tendency to see the heart as the true seat of Evil Inclination, a number of questions are raised in Rabbinic sources. One of the questions discussed explores *when* the *yetzer ha-ra* first affects a person's heart. Arguments for the embryonic state are offered, but the general notion is that the Evil Inclination dwells in the heart starting only from the moment of birth.[18] The death of small children then is understood not only as atonement for the sins of their parents,[19] but possibly also as an atonement for their own transgressions, since even small child's intentions are basically evil.[20] We are not forced to relegate such ideas to later developments during the time of the Talmud, because already Philo was not only familiar with them, but saw them as expressed in the Bible and worth of allegorization.[21]

11; *M.T.* 14,1. In the fragment from *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* quoted above a parallel list of positive attributes is ascribed to the heart: ". . . . the heart thinks,. . . . the heart is humbled,. . . . the heart is awake, the heart loves, the heart accepts words of comfort.. . . . the heart receives commandments, etc." (*Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 124b.)

[16] One of the indications is the use, in the Scripture already (Deut 31:11), of the noun *yetzer* alone, without the predicate *evil*, as representing the unreliability of man, the factor responsible for Israel's apostasy. Another indication is provided by the Aramaic targumic tradition which routinely adds, when translating the word *yetzer*, the predicate *evil* lacking in Hebrew original (*Tg. Ps.-Yonathan*, Deut 31:21. Cf. Targum for Ps 103:14). See Schechter, *Aspects. . . .*, 243. It is not impossible that that historical development influenced often repeated statements that the Evil Inclination of any specific person is older (at least by 13 years) than his Good Inclination. See, for example, *A.R.N.* 32d.

[17] Porter ("The Yecer . . .", 145) claimed that in Sir 15:14; 21:11 we had "definite proof of the use of the word *yecer*, almost two centuries before Christ, in the rabbinical sense."

[18] With Gen 4:7 (". . . guilt lies at the door/entrance") serving as the proof text. See *b. Sanh.* 91b; Cf. *Gen. R.* 34, 6; *y. Ber.* 6d. An isolated opinion is attested, according to which *yetzer ha-ra* begins to grow only from the age of ten, see *Tan. Beresh.* 7. See Urbach, *The Sages*, 220 and n. 14 there.

[19] See *b. Sabb.* 119b.

[20] See *y. Ber.* 6b. Intentions only, as he is still unable to perform sinful deeds. On this point Augustine would gladly agree with the Talmud.

[21] See Philo, *Ques. in. Gen.* II, 54. Commenting on Gen 8:21: "And the Lord

A second issue discussed in Rabbinic sources is the *(supporting) role of certain bodily parts in causing one to sin.* Usually the eyes (or eye) are named together with heart as co-agents of sin,[22] a tendency which is attested already in the Bible.[23] However, it is worth noting that side by side with traditions which presuppose a parallel responsibility between heart and eye as agents of sin, we find a related (polemical?) statement ascribed to an Tannaitic Rabbi to the effect that the first sinful impulse comes from the heart, the eyes only following the lead.[24]

A possibility of *overcoming the Evil Inclination* dwelling in the heart is also discussed. Prognoses vary from altogether pessimistic to mildly optimistic.[25] According to a typically optimistic opinion going back, it seems, to Tannaitic times,[26] when the words of Torah manage to find a dwelling place in the chambers of heart and enter and dwell there, the Evil Inclination looses its dominion over the person. In principle, *yetzer ha-ra*, which has been possessing the heart since the moment of birth, can be expelled from the heart and exchanged for quite a different tenant, the Torah.[27]

4

To review other opinions regarding the *location* of sinful inclination, we first turn to Philo.[28] I will restrict myself to those few statements

God said: Never again will I curse the earth because of the deeds of men, for the thought of man is resolutely turned toward evils from his youth," Philo suggests that "youth" here stands for the "swadding bands" of the tiny child.

[22] See, for instance, *m. Abot* 2:9, 11; cf. 5:19. See also *y. Ber.* 1, 5. Cf. *b. Sanh.* 48a; *b. Ber.* 20a; *b. Zebah.* 118b; *Num. Rab.* 16.

[23] Num 15:39: "That when they shall see them, they may remember all the commandments of the Lord, and not follow their own heart (thoughts) and eyes going astray after diverse things. They must not let their heart (thoughts) and eyes wonder free, into all manner of unfaithfulness." Here the eye represents—like the heart—intent or desire (cf. Mt 20:15). Still in other places, it may represent greed or envy, which is seen as one of the basic characteristics of the Evil Inclination, see *m. Abot* 2, 15.

[24] See *y. Ber.* 3c; *Sifre* Shalah, 115.

[25] The pessimistic one I discussed in another paper also appearing in this volume, see S. Ruzer, "The Death Motif in Late Antique *Teshuva* Narrative Patterns. With a Note on Romans 5–8."

[26] See *Abot R. Nat.* 15b.

[27] This replacing the Evil Inclination with the Torah which is achieved through the diligent study and the uncessant efforts at keeping the commandments should not to be confused with the prophetic hope that *God will change man's heart.* See note 12 above.

[28] It goes without saying that Philo's anthropology reflects opinions widely held

by Philo that are particularily relevant for present discussion, thus leaving out the whole portion of Philo's thought where he was concerned with the divine harmony between the revealed Law and the law installed by God in the cosmos, as well as in humanity. Such a harmony diffuses the inner conflict of the soul which may often lead to sin.[29] I will focus, instead, on those lines of reasoning attested in Philo's treatises where he addressed the issue of the human inherent tendency to rebel against God's commandmennt and tried to pinpoint the source of this rebellion.

Writing on the body, senses and mind (head)—the latter being the seat of heavenly thoughts and self control—Philo returns to the biblical account of the double creation of Adam (from the dust of earth and from God's spirit) and Eve, followed by the story of their seduction by the serpent. According to Philo, the serpent allegorically represents the love of pleasure that first encounters and has a discourse with the senses (represented by Eve). Through the senses the serpent cheats the mind (the ruling part of the soul)[30] itself.[31] Philo believed the mind was seduced prior to the sinful act; at least in some instances, however, the *initial source* of this love of pleasure seemed to be located outside the soul, in the human body as a whole. So Philo, commenting on Gen 7:21 ("All flesh that moved died [in the flood]"):

> Excellently and naturally has [Scripture] spoken of the destruction of moving *flesh*, for *flesh* moves the sensual pleasures and is moved by sensual pleasures. But such movements are causes of the destruction of souls, just as the rules of self-control and patience are the causes of salvation.[32]

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in hellenistic philosophic circles. What gives this anthropology its specific Jewish colouring is an attempt at establishing a link between a philosophic notion and the Scripture.

[29] *E.g.: De Opificio Mundi* 1–3, 17–20, 143–147. See H.A. Wolfson, *Philo. Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961), 192–194. I am gratefull to prof. Francesca Calabi from the University of Milan, who drew my attention to a number of important statements by Philo in this vein.

[30] See *Ques. in Gen.* II, 54.

[31] See *De Opificio Mundi* 165.

[32] *Ques. in Gen.* II, 22. The Loeb Classical Library edition is used throughout this paper for English quotations from Philo's works. Cf. *Spec. Leg.* IV, 187–188. This pitiful state characterizes the whole life span of an individual, so further on (II, 54), while commenting on Gen 8:21 ("... for the thought of man is resolutely turned toward evils from his youth") Philo states, that: "But resolution [*of the mind*] is [turned] not toward one evil [only] but, as is clear, toward all 'evils,' and this [state]

The same negative evaluation of the flesh in general may be found in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs.[33] We may add, following Urbach, that an extreme dualistic anthropology similar to Philo's was adopted not only by Josephus,[34] but at least by some of the Tannaim.[35] The existence of a *schism* between components of humanity (be it a di-partite or a tri-partite division as with Philo—Plato) has long been recognized by the students of Rabbinical literature.[36]

This idea of an anthropological schism which blames man's body for sin was seen by some Rabbis as problematic. A first century Tanna spoke of the whole person (body and soul) as standing before the heavenly Judge[37] and a polemical statement attributed to Hillel reads that man's very body constitutes the image of God.[38] Attempts at a harmonization of the anthropological schism were not lacking and a solution of shared responsibility was proposed: Antoninus said to Rabbi:

> the body and soul can free themselves from judgement. How? The body can say: It is the soul that sinned, for since the day that it left me, I lie still as a stone in the grave. And the soul can say: The body

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exists not momentarily but 'from his youth,' which is all but from his very swaddling bands, as if he were to a certain extent united, and at the same time, nourished and grown, with sins." It must be noted, however, that an alternative tendency also is attested in Philo's writing, according to which at least the sensations and passions (if not the physical body itself) are necessary to men, *i.e.* to the proper functioning of the mind. The mistake/the sin is then seen as derived not from the body/the sensations, but from the their wrong treatment by the mind, see, for example, *Leg. All.* II, 38.

[33] *E.g. T. Zeb.* 9, where negative evaluation of the flesh is combined—without an attempt at harmonization—with the notion of the exclusive responsibility of the head: "Do not be divided into two heads, because everything the Lord has made has a single head. He provides two shoulders, two hands, two feet, but all members obey(!) one head . . . Since they are flesh . . . the spirits of deceit had led them astray . . . resolution." The English translation used is by H.C. Kee, in: J.H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (New York: Doubleday, 1985), vol. 1, 807.

[34] E.g. in *Wars* III, 8, 5; VII, 8, 7. See E. Urbach, *The Sages* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1984), 331.

[35] Who applied to man the saying "Shake off the salt and throw the meat to the dog" claiming that the salt stands here for the soul (God's share) while the meat for the body (parents's share) (*b. Nidda* 31a). See Urbach, *The Sages*, 218. Cf. *b. Nidda* 16b.

[36] See Urbach, *The Sages*, 220. Sometimes the division in the Talmud and in the Midrash is not of body vs. soul but that of bodily functions vs. heavenly attributes: man is said to be like beasts in regard to eating, drinking, propagating, relieving himself and dying. See *Gen. R.* 14, 3; *b. Hagigah* 16a. Cf. *Gen. R.* 8, 11.

[37] *m. Abot* 3:1.

[38] *b. Ab. Zar.* 27b. See Urbach, *The Sages*, 226–227.

> has sinned, for since the day I left it, I fly in the air like a bird, lame and blind. . . . Even so the Holy One, blessed be He, takes the soul and casts it into the body and judges them as one (*b. Sanh.* 91a–b).[39]

The above harmonization is similar to that proposed by Philo, who not only sees the soul as approached by sin through the body, but states that the soul and even its upper part, the mind itself, are united with the sinful flesh and, therefore, tainted by sin[40] and consequently "the Law prescribes purification both for the body and the soul."[41]

5

We have discussed in the previous paragraph an attitude which views humanity's being flesh as the first cause of its sinfulness, the body as the abode of sin. Alongside this attitude, Philo sometimes also located sinful desire specifically in certain parts of the body. Philo's argument was presented as an interpretation of the biblical account in Gen 3:14–15, where the issue is the peculiar bodily structure of the serpent. Philo claimed the belly, the only remaining outer organ of the serpent, to represent the seat of the inclination to seek the pleasure, the source of sin:

> . . . . the serpent spoken of is a fit symbol of pleasure because in the first place he is an animal without feet sunk prone upon his belly. . . . The lover of pleasure. . . . is so weighted and dragged downwards that it is with difficulty that he lifts up his head, thrown down and tripped up by intemperance. . . . causing *the cravings of the belly* to burst out and fanning them into flame, make the man a glutton, while they also stimulate and stir up the stings of his sexual lusts (*De opificio mundi* 157–163).[42]

It may be surmised that Philo was familiar with the story of the serpent being deprived of other bodily limbs after his transgression. Cutting off the serpent's legs, suggested by the biblical account itself[43] was elsewhere interpreted by Philo as "dissolution and paralysis" of the whole body as the result of the belly's dominion over

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[39] See Urbach, *The Sages*, 223.
[40] *E.g. De spec. leg.* II, 314, III, 86, 89, M.
[41] *De spec. leg.* I, 259, M. II, 251.
[42] Cf. *Ques. in Gen.* I, 31; *Ebr.* 22; *Spec. leg.* I, 150; *Leg. All.* I, 70; III, 114.
[43] Gen 3:14.

it. The belly is presented here as the worst enemy of the rest of the bodily parts causing their paralysis/amputation.[44] The amputation motif receives a different twist in *Apocalypsis Mosis*, where not the belly the serpent is left with, but the limbs which are dismembered as punishment are said to be weapons of the serpent's snare:

> . . . . Accursed art you beyond all wild beasts. You shall be deprived of your hands as well as your feet. There shall be left for you neither ear nor wing nor one limb of all that with which you enticed them in your depravity and caused them to be cast out of Paradise. . . . (*Apoc. Mos.* 26).[45]

The question of the origin and sources of *Apocalypsis Mosis* cannot be discussed here. Most scholars, admitting Christian editing, speak of traditional Jewish material used widely by the author(s). The fragment in question does not have any distinct Christian elements, so there is a reason to believe that we have here an example of (per)using older Midrash.[46]

The story is composed of two main elements: the act of cutting the limbs off and the explanation for the deed. There can be little doubt that the amputation motif itself clearly belongs to the category of traditional midrashic material: it is suggested by the biblical account itself, is hinted at by Philo and resurfaces in different strata of the Midrash dealing with Gen 3:14–15.[47] On the other hand, the

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[44] "And it is the custom of adversaries that through that which they bestow as gifts they cause great harm, such as defectiveness of vision to the eyes, and difficulty of hearing to the ears, and insensibility to the other (sense organs); and they bring upon the whole body dissolution and paralysis taking away all its health . . ." (*Ques. in. Gen.* I, 48.)

[45] Here and further on the English translation is by M.D. Johnson, in: J.H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, 277–287.

[46] See M.D. Johnson, "Life of Adam and Eve. An Introduction," in: J.H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 249. M. Stone (*A History of the Literature of Adam and Eve*, Series: Early Judaism and its Literature [Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1992], 42–70) forcefully argues that the absence of Christian elements in *a text* does not necessarily classify it as Jewish; I will not commit myself, therefore, concerning the particular milieu where *Apoc. Mos.* in its present form initially circulated. What is important for present discussion is that *Apoc. Mos.* bears testimony to a certain development in the tendency (found already with Philo) to see a connection between the serpent's sinful nature, his punishment (curse) by God (Genesis 3) and the resulting form of his body. We shall see right away that advanced stages of this development—whoever incorporated it into *Apoc. Mos.*—may be discerned in later Rabbinic Midrash.

[47] *Gen. R. 20, 5.* Cf. *Rirke R. El.* 14 (Friedlander, 99). Note the later tradition clearly discriminating between the punishment of the serpent and that of the devil in *Pirke R. El.* 12. *Gen. R.* seems to preserve an earlier version of the Midrashic

justification for the amputation proposed by *Apoc. Mos.* differs both from that of Philo and that of the *Midrash Rabbah.*[48] However, as we will see further, the motif of legs, hands etc. being inciters of sin does reappear, *mutatis mutandis*, in later Midrash. But first, let us take a closer look at the story told in *Apoc. Mos.*:

> 16: "And the devil spoke to the serpent, saying, 'Rise and come to me, and I will tell you something to your advantage.' Then the serpent came to him, and the devil said to him, 'I hear you are wiser than all the beasts; so I came to observe you. I found you greater than all the beasts, and they associate with you; . . . . Why [then] do you eat of the weeds of Adam and not of the fruit of Paradise? Rise and come and let us make him to be cast out of Paradise through his wife. . . . The serpent said to him, 'I fear lest the Lord be wrathful to me.' The devil said to him, 'Do not fear; only become my vessel, and I will speak a word through your mouth by which you will be able to deceive him.' . . ."
> 18: "Then the serpent said to me, 'May God live! For I am grieved over you, that you are like animals. For I do not want you to be ignorant; but rise, come and eat, and observe the glory of the tree.' And I said to him, 'I fear lest God be angry with me, just as he told us.' He said to me, 'Fear not; for at the very time you eat, *your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, knowing good and evil . . .*' . . . And I said to him, 'It [the tree] is pleasing to consider with the eyes'; yet I was afraid to take the fruit. And he said to me, 'Come, I will give it to you. Follow me.'"
> 19: "And I opened (the gate) for him, and he entered into Paradise, passing through in front of me. After he had walked for a while, he turned and said to me . . . wishing in the end to entice and ruin me . . . For coveteousness is the origin of every sin. And I bent the branch towards the earth, took of the fruit, and ate. . . .
> 21: "And I cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Adam, Adam, where are you? Rise, come to me and I will show you a great mystery.' And when your father came, . . . I opened my mouth and the devil was speaking, and I began to admonish him, saying, 'Come, my lord Adam, listen to me, and eat of the fruit of the tree of which God told us not to eat from it, and you shall be as God.' Your father answered and said, 'I fear lest God be angry with me.' And I said to him, 'Do not fear . . .' Then I quickly persuaded him. He ate and his eyes were opened, and he also realized his nakedness. And he said to me, 'O

elaboration: there are yet no attempts to justify the particular form of punishment. Justification attempts usually characterize more developed forms of a tradition.

[48] I would suggest that in our fragment the justification motif is one superimposed on the story—as the text stands, it is not clear at all why the serpent's wing and not his tongue is among the punished limbs.

> evil woman! Why have you wrought destruction among us. You have estranged me from the glory of God.' . . ."
> 32: Then Eve rose and went out and fell on the ground and said, "I have sinned, O God; . . . I have sinned much; . . . and all sin in creation has come through me."

The structure of the fragment has two outstanding features: introduction (in addition to the serpent) of the figure of a devil[49] and the striking symmetry between the behaviour of the serpent and of Eve. The devil addresses the serpent who is fearful at first (16) and in a like manner the serpent addresses Eve who also expresses her fear (18). The devil appeals to the serpent's supposed inferior status and calls him to "rise over himself" (16); in a similar fashion the serpent manipulates Eve (18).[50] The serpent "speaks words of devil" (16) and Eve does the same (21). The serpent walks in the garden (his legs are among the auxillaries of his snare) and draws Eve after him (19); in a like fashion Eve draws Adam after herself (21), etc. The story strongly suggests that Eve's guilt parallels the serpent's; Eve declares that "all sin in creation has come about through me" (32). Moreover, in the text, as it stands now, some elements of the serpent's punishment may be properly understood only if we see them as a punishment befittingly due to Eve, e.g. cutting off the hands (26)[51]—it is Eve who confesses that she "bent the branch toward the earth, took the fruit, and ate. . . ." (19).

Eve escapes amputation in *Apocalypsis Mosis*, but the amputation does take place (and this time as a preventive measure and not as a punishment) in the famous midrashic description of Eve's creation:

> I will not create her from [Adam's] head, lest she be swelled-headed; nor from the ear, lest she be an eavesdropper; nor from the mouth, lest she be a gossip; nor from the heart, lest she be prone to jealousy; nor from the hand, lest she be light-fingered; nor from the foot, lest she be a gadabout; but from the modest part of man, for even when he stands naked, that part is covered (*Gen. R.* 18, 2).

It is clear that the real source of sin are the limbs of Adam (and by extension, Eve's); each of those limbs is the abode of a particular evil inclination, and, therefore, they must not be employed at all for

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[49] And angels. See *Apoc. Mos.* 13; *Gen. R.* 20, 5, and *Pirke R. El.* 13 (Friedlander, 91–96).

[50] In both manipulations the issue is, so to say, the quality of the food supply!

[51] See n. 44.

further creation (and not only punished afterwards).[52] We see that the underpinnings of the amputation motif may be discerned already in *Apoc. Mos.* and the motif is re-used (adapted) later in Rabbinic Midrash.[53]

In sum: in a number of texts reviewed in this previous section the source of temptation is located neither in the soul/heart nor in the flesh in general, but in specific bodily members. Sometimes it is one particulary sinful member,[54] but in other cases different limbs are presented as responsible for different temptations. This last motif will be especially relevant for further discussion.[55]

6

Let us now concentrate on a particular sub-development of the tradition which sees different limbs as responsible for different temptations. This sub-development found its expression in composing lists of (responsible) bodily parts. A later and modified expression of this trend is attested in the tractate *Makkot* of the Babylonian Talmud, by the name of r. Simlai (3rd century): the sum total of 613 Torah commandments is subdivided into 248 positive precepts which correspond to the 248 parts of the human body and 365 negative precepts, parallel to the number of days in the solar year.[56] The meaning of the number 365 is explained by the suggestion that every day Satan

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[52] Although in the end, according to the Midrash, the preemptive amputation proves non sufficient.

[53] One may see this later appropriation as an additional corroboration of this motif's Jewish origin, but even if the process of transition included some Christian stages (or Jewish-Christian or whatever gray areas avoiding definitions might have existed there), we may speak of a meaningful hermeneutical tradition concerning Genesis 2, 3, that for a long period of time had a particular function, *i.e.* was called to meet certain religious needs and had an impact on the development of the Rabbinic thought. See the end of n. 46. See also J.A. Sanders, "From Isaiah 61 to Luke 4," in: J. Neusner (ed.), *Christianity, Judaism and Other Greco-Roman Cults* (Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity 12; Leiden: Brill, 1975), 75.

[54] Of course, the belly is not always the main culprit; another natural candidate is the sexual organ, see, for example, *b. Sukk.* 52b.

[55] It goes without saying that in the Rabbinic literature altogether different developments are also attested. This varigated literature offers many examples of a positive evaluation of bodily limbs in general and specific limbs in particular. See, for example, *b. Sabb.* 151a–b, where even the sexual organ gets a positive evaluation (baldness and castration are viewed negatively); also *b. Bekoroth* 44a–45b.

[56] See *b. Mak.* 23b. It is the earliest extant Jewish source that speaks of the 613 commandments.

tries to entrap the man and cause him to transgress a commandment.

It might be argued that the limbs in this talmudic section, being connected with positive commandments only, do not belong to the realm of Satan, the realm of temptations and transgressions. At first glance it may seem to be a completely different tendency from that discerned above in *Apoc. Mos.* and the *Gen. Rab.* section on the creation of Eve. However, it may be demonstrated that the connection with the positive precepts is a secondary one.

The fact that the same total number of limbs, 248, is mentioned in Mishna[57] without any connection with the Torah commandments, led Urbach to conclude that the connection of the body parts with the positive precepts attested in the Talmud is the result of a later development.[58] Following Urbach, we may note, that in the Talmud itself, side by side with this later development, a residual tradition is attested where the limbs are still associated with transgressions. In another talmudic fragment,[59] Satan, whose name numerical value, we are informed, is 364, is connected with the days of the year and with the negative commandments—exactly as in the section from *b. Mak.* 23b discussed above. Abraham (his name numerical value is 248) represents the positive precepts; however, it is explained that at first his name was Abram (numerical value 243) and only later was he given an additional letter *he* (numerical value 5). With the *he* Abraham gained mastery over the five additional limbs: 2 eyes, 2 ears and the membrum, "which entice one to immorality." It is clear that what Abraham was given here was the power to resist the temptations having their abode in those 5 limbs, temptations which had led and would lead men to transgress Torah's negative precepts. Would it be too farfetched to suppose that what Abraham had at his disposal before attaining the new level of self control, was the ability to suppress sinful desires of the rest of the members of his body? Such a hypothesis—that this section bears a witness to an older layer of tradition where limbs were viewed as seat of temptations—is corroborated by *Abot R. Nat.* where it is stated unequivocally that all 248 organs are ruled by the Evil Inclination![60]

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[57] See *m. Ohol.* 1:8.

[58] See Urbach, *The Sages*, 342–343. According to Urbach, it was the earlier knowledge of the number of the bodily limbs and the idea that every limb (as well as every day of the year) needs a precept, "that led to the fixing of the exact number six hundred and thirteen."

[59] *b. Ned.* 32b.

[60] *Abot R. Nat.* 32a. Even Schechter, notwithstanding all his eagerness to demon-

Combining this with the evidence supplied by additional talmudic sources,[61] where there is a clear parallel between the actions of the Evil Inclination and that of the limbs (both *yetzer ha-ra* and the limbs are said to seduce a man in this world and testify against him in the world to come), we may conclude that the development of this motif of counting the limbs bears testimony to the survival of the ambivalent evaluation of the limbs character and function in the Jewish tradition of late antiquity. A suggestion may be raised that the later modification of this motif—that in which the limbs because to be connected exclusively with the positive commandments—was a reaction of sorts to the opposite trend to see in the bodily members the source of every possible transgression of the Torah negative precepts. This reaction seems to go hand by hand with putting ever greater stress on the heart or mind or soul as responsible for sinful inclinations, as the seat of the Evil Inclination. The same gradual suppression of the bodily responsibility for transgression may be discerned in the halachic developments of the early Tannaitic period that concern technical aspects of the execution of hard criminals. As was shown by Halbertal, these halachic developments were characterized by transition from prescribing an execution which punishes the body to prescribing an execution which punishes the soul but leaves the body intact.[62]

7

Our review of the trends concerning the seat of sin would be lacking without mentioning one additional idea attested in Jewish sources of the Second Temple period and on to late antiquity, namely the notion of the *exterior source of sin.* Genesis 3 and, even more emphatically, the apocryphal story of Adam and Eve contained this exterior element:

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strate that according to the Rabbis the real drama is going within man's heart, had to agree that according to the passage from *Abot R. Nat.*, the heart in itself seems to be no more corrupt than the rest of the 248 bodily organs. See S. Schechter, *Aspects* . . ., 257.

[61] *b. Ta'an.* 11a; *b. Suk.* 52b.

[62] See M. Halbertal, *Interpretative Revolutions in the Making* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1997) (Hebrew), 145–167. According to Halbertal, during that period in certain circles the human body were strongly associated with the concept of the image of God, so any considerable harm to it as a result of a proper halachic procedure became unthinkable. The discussion of possible links of this suggestion with the schemes developed in this paper will have to wait for another opportunity.

we have mentioned the transference of the guilt from (Adam to) Eve to the Serpent to the devil. This transference, which is attested also in Rabbinic sources,[63] is strongly present in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs.[64] The source of temptation may be another human being, with a women as a usual culprit[65] or evil spirits (spirits of Beliar), a highly developed motif both in *T. 12 Patr.*[66] and in the Dead Sea Scrolls.[67] According to the *T. 12 Patr.*, the influence of the evil spirits is supposed to be fought either through the self-training of person's mind[68] or with the help of the angel of peace, who intervenes in order to guide the person's soul.[69] In the Testament of Simeon we are presented with a nuanced picture: spirits of deceit and of envy rule over the entire mind of man, while the first three on the list of the evil spirits are described as having their seat in the body: impurity is seated in the nature and senses, insatiable desire in the belly,[70] fighting in the liver and the gall.[71] At least in some Qumranic texts the issue of the internal struggle against the sinful influence from outside seems to be overshadowed by a keen interest in redefining the exact nature of sin conditioned by a newly revealed, true interpretation of Torah precepts (vis-a-vis previous stages of relative ignorance).[72]

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[63] See *y. Ber.* 7d, cf. *b. Ber.* 17a. The impression is that we have here, as Schechter (*Aspects . . .*, 263) put it, "a certain quasi-external agency. . . . responcible for sin, whilst man himself, by his spontaneous nature, is only too anxious to live in accordance with God's commandments."

[64] The question of a distinct Jewish stage in the history of the *T. 12 Patr.* remains open, although almost unanimous agreement (H.W. Hollander and M. de Jonge, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. A Commentary* [Leiden: Brill, 1985], 84) suggests that the material included in the book "was partly taken directly from the OT and partly derived from Jewish sources and Haggadic(sic!) traditions." See the end of note 46 and note 53.

[65] See especially, *T. Jud.* 13; *T. Reub.* 5 *et al.*

[66] See *T. Benj.* 3, 6; *T. Issa.* 3; *T. Reub.* 2. Cf. *1 Enoch* 6; 10:7: "And the whole earth has been defiled through the teaching of the works of Azazel; to him ascribe all sin.

[67] Paul Garnet (*Salvation and Atonement in the Qumran Scrolls* [Tubingen, 1977], 114) summarised the two central features of the Qumranic idea regarding the source of sin as follows: "[1] In Qumranic texts a parallel is established between sin and illness; sin is contagious and contact with sinners is to be avoided (sinners make others to sin); [2] Another cause of sinful behavior is the activity of evil spirits. It is not clear whether the ultimative destiny of the wicked is annihilation or eternal punishment, but the eternal punishment of evil spirits is more certain."

[68] *T. Benj.* 3.

[69] *T. Benj.* 6.

[70] As have been noticed earlier, the same obvious connection with the belly is also found in Philo. See note 42.

[71] *T. Sim.* 3, 1. See H.W. Hollander and M. de Jonge, *The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs. A Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 94.

[72] See G.A. Anderson, "Intentional and Unintentional Sin in the Dead Sea

8. *Preliminary results*

We have reviewed thus far a number of different trends regarding the seat of sin in Jewish religious thought of the Second Temple period on to late antiquity. We have seen that in addition to the idea of external factors causing man to sin, a multiplicity of ideas concerning the inner location of the *yetzer ha-ra* exists. In some texts different ideas are presented side by side unharmonized,[73] while in others attempts at harmonization may be discerned. For the sake of clarity three basic (different, but not necessarily disconnected) theses may be formulated:

a) The heart (mind, soul) is the seat of temptation. Transgression is committed by the heart. The organs depend on the heart's decisions. The fight is fought in the heart. In Rabbinic terminology: one is exhorted to substitute Torah for Evil Inclination as the "tenant" of the heart. According to the *T. 12 Patr.*, the angel of peace will guard one's soul.

b) Humanity's flesh is the first cause of sinfulness. One's body ignites the process of temptation, and only at some later stage does the heart/soul/mind succumb to temptation. It is with the heart's consent that the sinful inclination is realized in an appropriate action.

c) Different sinful inclinations have their abode in different limbs of the body. The sum total of the limbs (with the addition of the days of the solar year) corresponds to the sum total of Torah's positive and negative precepts. The limbs not only perform sinful deeds, but are the true inciters of sin; therefore, not the punishment of the limbs in the Gehenna,[74] but rather their preventive amputation or non creation is called for.

It has been suggested that in some cases the notion connecting sins with limbs belongs to an early layer of tradition, being later overshadowed by heart/soul centered concepts. But in contrast to

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Scrolls," in: D.P. Wright (ed.), *Pomegranates and Golden Bells. Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near Eastern Ritual, Law and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbraus, 1995), 49–64. Cf. Tertullian's (*On Repentance* 3) readiness to allow that there are sins which "are imputed to chance, or to necessity, or to ignorance" combined with his insistance on the central role of the will in all other cases of both fighting the sin and submitting to its demands. See A. Roberts, J. Donaldson (eds.), *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eermans, 1978), vol. 3, 659.

[73] *E.g. T. Zeb.* 9. See note 33 above.

[74] See note 7.

corresponding halachic developments,[75] these heart-centered tendencies do not fully suppress the limbs-centered ones, which are still found not only in Pseudepigrapha but also in later layers of Rabbinic literature. There are indications that both traditions of limbs and heart responsibility existed side by side in early Tannaitic and even the pre-Christian period, although their fully developed forms are usually attested only in later Midrashic tradition. In some cases, earlier stages of those developments may be reconstructed, even when the extant textual evidence for such reconstruction is lacking.

9

Now, let us return to the New Testament, first to the Synoptics. We have already seen that the first one of the conflicting notions discussed above, namely that only the heart is responsible, is expressed in the Sermon on the Mount[76] and in Mt 15:17–18, where the heart is claimed to be the sole source of a person's evil thoughts and evil deeds resulting from evil thoughts:

> Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach [belly], and goes into the sewer? But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart; and this is what defiles.[77] For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person . . .

Alternatively, we find the Synoptics stating that the body as a whole, the flesh, is the seat of the sin,[78] as well as sayings where particular limbs are presented as the source of temptation. At the very beginning of our discussion a reference was made to Mt 5:29–30, where the eye or the hand were blamed[79] with an obvious presence of the

[75] See note 62.

[76] See Matthew 5.

[77] The issue is beyond the scope of this paper, but it is clear that the speaker sees sinful inclinations as defiling the man. Jesus' stance on the defiling power of sin as different but no less real that ritual impurities have been recently discussed by Klawans vis-à-vis other contemporary options (Philo, Qumran, early Tannaitic sources). See J. Klawans, "The Impurity of Immorality in Ancient Judaism," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 48 (1997): 14–16.

[78] Mt 26:41: "Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Cf. Mk 14:38; Lk 22:46.

[79] We cannot go now into a discussion of the meaning of the choice of this or that particular member as the source of lustful inclinations. One can consult ICC or other standard commentaries for possible interpretations. But see *Mek. R. Sim.*

amputation motif: the limb[80] is to be cut off as a preventive measure in order to escape Gehenna. Mt 18:8 supplies an additional example of this amputation motif with a fuller list of limbs:[81]

> If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble (*skandalizei*)[82] cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to enter life maimed or lame than to have two hands or two feet and to be thrown into the eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to stumble,[83] tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into the hell (*gehenna*) of fire.

Although the discourse in Matthew 18 includes a reference to the Son of Man (Mt 18:11) and the role of Jesus himself is stressed there,[84] the saying under discussion itself (Mt 18:8) is devoid of any messianic connotations. Moreover, it has a clear parallel in the Sermon on the Mount, in a fragment that is generally believed to belong to the earliest stratum of the Gospel tradition,[85] and may possibly go back to the early days of Jesus' mission. My suggestion, therefore, is that the appearance of the amputation advice and the tension between blaming the heart and seeing bodily limbs as the seat of sin, attested side by side in the Synoptics, reflect the Second Temple period plurality of traditional Jewish approaches reviewed earlier. The testimony of the Synoptics with its first-century dating corroborates the descriptions found in Philo and the Pseudepigrapha. The Synoptic material fills the void of both heart and limbs-centered

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on Exodus, Ithro 20 (D. Hoffman's edition, 111: "Why (*lo*) *tin'af* (do not commit adultery) is a four-letter word? Because it is possible to commit adultery by foot, by hand, by eye and by heart." Cf. *Pesiq. Rab.* 24.

[80] It should be noted that the use of the word *melos* (limb) in the Gospels is restricted to the saying under discussion.

[81] It may be of some interest that in the course of the further discussion in the fragment from *Mekilta* mentioned in note 79 the eye and the heart function as synonims (of intent), thus reducing the number of components in the list to three: hand, foot and eye/heart. This is evidently also the case of Mt 18:8.

[82] Hebrew equivalent must most probably be *mezannah*. See, for instance, *Num. Rab.* 17, 6 ("*ha-lev we-ha-einayim. . . . mezannim et ha-guf*"). Cf. *b. Ber.* 20a.

[83] Cf. *Mek. R. Sim.* It is not impossible that the idea of two eyes we have here is a parallel to that of two hearts mentioned earlier.

[84] See Mt 18:20.

[85] So, for instance, Viviano (B.T. Viviano, "Matthew," in *The New Jerome . . .*, 639) states that: "The sermon is a Matthean construction, pieced together from material scattered in Q. . . ., Mark and other material. There is no reason to doubt that most of this material derives from Jesus himself; but each case must be weighed on its own merits, and the sayings have undergone revision."

traditions between the earlier and the more developed forms attested in Rabbinic literature.

Alongside those two tendencies which were held in tension, the Synoptics also bear testimony to alternative evaluations of the source of sin, such as blaming an external agent. In the discourse in Matthew 18, therefore, as well as in its synoptic parallels,[86] another person acts as the blamed external agent.[87] Another synoptic evidence suggests that, at least in some cases, the external agent of sin are evil spirits which cause man stumble.[88]

10

Let us turn to Paul's stance on the question of the seat of sin. It is also characterized by an unresolved variety of approaches: sometimes it is the heart that is pinpointed as the only real culprit,[89] in other cases it is the flesh.[90] Further we will be especially interested by the apostle's appraisal of the role of the bodily limbs. Sometimes Paul assigns the limbs a positive role; the very diversity of bodily members, including those weak(!) may symbolize the desired diversity of the members of the Church, who collectively represent the body of Christ.[91]

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[86] See Mk 9:42; Lk 17:1–2.

[87] A converted believer is compared here to a small child, and for those, it seems, the danger comes from outside:

> But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened round his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe to the world for temptations to sin! For it is necessary that temptations come, but woe to that man by whom the temptation comes! Mt 18:6–7).

[88] The issue is a complicated one and demands a further investigation. Although the Qumran literature may offer a number of illuminating parallels, it is still not clear to what extent the Gospel traditions establish a connection between sin, evil spirits and sickness. At least sometimes, e.g. Mt 8:2–15 (cf. *Tg. Neb.* on Is 53:4), this connection is overlooked. Without trying to give a definitive answer to this question, we may note that when the Synoptics adopt the motif of evil spirits, they make use, as it seems, of traditional material. Even when the spirits' task is to make christological statements as, for example, in Lk 4:40–41. Cf. Mk 1:32-34), the Synoptic parallels make it possible to reconstruct the earlier layer of the tradition, where the demons' theme was still divorced from the messianic one (see Mt 8:16–17).

[89] As in Rom 2:5.

[90] See, for instance, Rom 7:14.

[91] See I Cor 12:12, 14, 18, 19, 20, 22, 25–27; Rom 12:4–5. Cf. Cor 6:15: "Do you know that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid."

In other, more ambivalent, references the limbs are presented with two options: either to succumb to sin or to become the "vessels of righteousness".[92] We will focus, however, on a series of verses in Romans 7 and 8 where the limbs are depicted as the seat of unlawful passions:

> (7:1) Do you not know, brothers. . . .—*for I am speaking to those who know the law*—that the law is binding on a person only during that person's lifetime? (7:2) Thus a married woman is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives; but if her husband dies, she is discharged from the law concerning her husband. . . . (7:4) In the same way, my friends, you have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead in order that we may bear fruit for God. (7:5) While we were living in the flesh, *our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members* to bear fruit for death. (7:6) But now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we are slaves not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit. . . . (7:14) For we know that the law is spiritual; but *I am of the flesh, sold into slavery under sin.* (7:15) I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. (7:16) *Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good.* (7:17) But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. (7:18) For I know that *nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh.* I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. (7:19) For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. (7:20) Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but *sin that dwells within me.* (7:21) So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. (7:22) For *I delight in the law of God in my inmost self,* (7:23) *but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.* (7:24) Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? (7:25) Thanks be to God--[it is done] through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, *with my mind I am a slave to the law of God, but with my flesh I am a slave to the law of sin.* . . . (8:11) If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies. . . . (8:13) for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

Let us try to reaccess the structure of Paul's reasoning vis-à-vis more general tendencies in Jewish thought, discussed above. When the apostle speaks of salvation (as in 7:25) or, further of the Spirit of

[92] See, for example, Rom 6:13, 19.

God coming to dwell in man's heart/mind as the result of Jesus' resurrection (8:11,13), his reasoning is informed by his very particular belief in Jesus' salvific resurrection. Alternatively, when he describes the general (including his own?) human condition, there is a much stronger probability that he makes use of traditional material. According to Fitzmyer, "Paul describes the moral experience of the Ego faced with the law, depicting it as a battle between the Ego of flesh dominated by sin and the spiritual law of God [with the mind/heart—*nous/cardia* on its side—*S.R.*]. . . . The Ego finds itself on both sides and is torn by the division."[93]

What Paul describes in Romans 7–8 is, in a sense, a variation of the rabbinic Double Inclination scheme. The important difference, however, is that the Evil Inclination is said not to belong initially to the same very heart/mind, but to be imposed on the mind from the outside (7:17, 20).[94] Some illuminating parallels from the Dead Sea Scrolls have already been pointed out.[95] The external agent idea is found, as we have seen, not only in Qumran but also in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs;[96] in Romans 7–8 it receives an interesting twist: the spirit of sin, which takes hold of the Ego does emerge from outside the *nous/cardia* but not from outside the body.[97]

Traditionally efforts have been made to show that Paul in Romans 7 meant law as natural law or law of the pagans, but these arguments have proved unconvincing. Fitzmeyer represents many scholars today in arguing that the law Paul was refering to in this part of Romans "is the law given to Moses for the Jewish people."[98] This is unequivocally indicated, among other verses, by Rom 7:1–3. I would like to take this argument further and to suggest that in the context of Paul's discussion of the law in Romans a distinction should be made between the apostle's treatment of the *flesh in general* and the *members of the body* in particular.

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[93] J.A. Fitzmyer, *Romans. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (The Anchor Bible; New York: Doubleday, 1971), 473.

[94] The opposition in verses 8:11 and 8:13 seems to indicate that self-imposing Evil Impulse is understood as a spirit, the spirit (the Ego according to Fitzmyer) of the flesh living according to its nature.

[95] *E.g.* IQS 3:15–4:20. For more information see Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 465–466.

[96] See notes 66, 67.

[97] Cf. *T. of Sim.* 3, 1. See note 71.

[98] See Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 463, 464, 468, *et al.* Stanley Stowers (*A Rereading of Romans* [New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1994], 137–139, 117) has recently argued that the same is true even for Romans 1, 2.

The word *soma* is used throughout Romans to designate the body which is dominated by sin[99] while *ta mele* (limbs) appear when the apostle claims that this domination by sin makes for a law of sorts, *another law* (*heteros nomos*).[100] The antithetical parallelism between the Mosaic law accepted by the human mind and the sinful law represented by the bodily limbs reminds us of the ambivalent status of the limbs in the Rabbinic tradition, where, as I tried to demonstrate, one may discern a development which turns every limb from the seat of a particular transgression into a tool for performing a particular Torah commandment. Romans 7 seems to bear testimony to an early stage of this development, when the dominant trend was still to connect the limbs with negative commandments (transgressions). The limbs already represent here (antithetically) the Torah, although no numerical computations are yet mentioned. If my suggestion is right, the evidence of this first-century Epistle may be of critical importance for our efforts to reconstruct the trajectory along which the motif of the Torah-Limbs connection was developed.

10. *Suggested conclusions*

In Jewish sources of the Second Temple period—on to the period of late antiquity—a multiplicity of concepts/notions regarding the seat of sin were attested.[101] Although attempts at a harmonization of heart/limbs as agents of sin were not lacking, the tension or even the opposition between viewing the heart/soul/mind or the body as the first source of evil inclination should not be overlooked. Within the primary general framework where bodily limbs were seen as the source of temptation, we noted a tendency to compile lists of different limbs responsible for different transgressions. Important developments have been observed: the demonic character of the limbs is at some instances down-played; telling remnants of the ambivalent appraisal of the limbs' role notwithstanding, a tendency prevailed to stress the responsibility of the soul and to present the bodily members as destined to perform God's will; at some point a connection between

[99] See Rom 1:24; 4:19; 6:6, 12; 7:14.

[100] See Rom 7:22–23. It seems that to do negative things can make for a ritual in its own right.

[101] Regarding the multiplicity of experiences of evil, see the contribution in this volume by F. Stolz, 211–230.

the limbs of the body and the positive commandments of the Torah was established and it suppressed the earlier connection between the limbs and the negative Torah precepts. According to some Rabbinical sources Torah's dwelling in the heart (from where it unroots the previous tenant, the Evil Inclination) is to provide for this transformation.

The pericopes in the Synoptics dealing with the question of the seat of sin clearly belong to the earliest layer of the Gospel tradition and are not necessarily connected with the specific Messianic beliefs of the nascent Christian community: therefore, they may be seen as bearing testimony to a relatively early stage of the transition from utterly negative appraisal of the bodily limbs role to connecting them with the positive commandments of the Torah. A characteristic plurality of conceptions is discerned in the Synoptics: heart, limbs and external factors, including evil spirits are alternatively presented as the source of sin. As midrashic sources where the amputation motif is attested are of later date, the presence of this motif in the Synoptics is of a particular interest. The Synoptics represent a stage when the amputation motif was not yet sufficiently suppressed and the limbs were not yet turned into "the instruments of righteousness unto God."

In Romans the characteristic plurality of locations of sin may also be discerned. A distinction between Paul's references to the human flesh in general and to bodily limbs in particular was drawn. It was suggested that in the Epistle we have a testimony to an early stage of a midrashic development, at the beginning of which the limbs were associated with *heteros nomos*, transgressions of the Torah's negative precepts, while later (at least from the 3rd century on)[102] they became connected with the Torah's positive commandments.

It is worth noting that while in the Rabbinic milieu the way to overcome the sin in most cases led via Torah (that was to take hold of and dwell in either the heart/mind or in the limbs, depending on where the seat of sin was believed to be), Paul employed God's spirit,[103] that enable the believer (who is "in Jesus Christ") to yield his members as instruments of righteousness unto God.[104] As Rom

[102] See note 56 above.

[103] Whose function here is not unlike that of the angel of peace of the *T. 12 Patr.* see note 69.

[104] See Rom 6:9–13; 8:1–2.

8:11 clearly indicates, according to Paul the resurrection of Jesus gives hope also to flesh and bodily limbs, that are not doomed to remain the seat of sin forever. This intuition retained its centrality in Christian thought after Paul. It played an especially significant role in cases, as with Tertullian, when there was a need to fight gnostic tendencies. Tertullian takes care to stress that apart from incidents of ignorance, there is no sin except in the will and even bodily mortification has nothing to do with punishing the limbs,[105] which are to enjoy resurrection.[106]

This post-Pauline rehabilitation of the members of the body invites a comparison with an eventual turning of the bodily limbs into "the instruments of righteousness unto God" in Rabbinic tradition. Whether post-Pauline and Rabbinic rehabilitations of the limbs were two completely independent or, alternatively, interconnected processes is an intriguing question which we have only begun to discuss here.

[105] See Tertullian, *On Repentance* 3, 11.

[106] See, for example, Tertullian, *On the Resurrection of the Flesh*, 11, 14, 15, 17. In chapter 46 there Tertullian takes great pains to try to convince his readers that, "It is [only] the works of the flesh, not the substance of the flesh, which St. Paul. . . . condemns," see A. Roberts, J. Donaldson (eds.), *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 3, 578–579.

BAPTISMAL NUDITY AS A MEANS OF RITUAL PURIFICATION IN ANCIENT CHRISTIANITY

GIOVANNI FILORAMO

Introduction

One of the most interesting and, at the same time, least investigated problems in the formation of the identity of ancient Christianity, is the transformation that the Hebrew system of the purity rules underwent in the new religion.[1] We know the interpretation in which the original Christian message was an ethical message which had definitively replaced the ritual system of the Judaism of the time of Jesus, beginning from its material conception of impurity (Mark 7, 13). But we must bear another possible explanation in mind, and more precisely, the possibility that what we are confronted with, is not the elimination but the substitution of a certain system of purity rules with another.

To explain this passage and, therefore, following the aims of our workshop, to focus on the nature of the Christian "purification" better, I propose to analyse some aspects of the Christian initiation: baptism.[2] Also as a consequence of its novelty, we can actually see the formation of a new practical and symbolic network in this rite. Through the construction of the new man by baptism, this symbolism, without eliminating it, has transformed and reinterpreted the ancient concept of pollution, the material impurity.

We must bear in mind the fact that, from its beginnings, the Christian baptism has shaped itself in an original way. While the rituals of the contemporary religions were lost in the history of time, the Christian initiation was an essentially new rite which aimed at the construction of a new social reality through a typical ritual of spiritual palingenesis. On the one hand, in a different way from the Jewish rituals of ablution, its aim was not the restoration of the previous

[1] See A. Destro – M. Pesce, *La normativa del* Levitico: *interpretazioni ebraiche e protocristiane*, in "Annali di storia dell'esegesi" 13/1 (1996), 15–37, here 37.

[2] On the Christian baptism, see A. Benoit, *Le baptême chrétien au II^e siècle*, P. Lang, Bern – New York 1994 (1st ed., Paris 1953).

condition of temporarily lost purity, but the restoration of the original paradisiacal reality lost following the sin of Adam and Eve: an aim pursued not through ablutions repeatable in time and space, but through a unique and irrepeatable act, thought of as an eschatological act through which some thing definitive happened. On the other hand, in a different way from the pagan mystery rituals as those described in the book XI of the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius of Madaura, the Christian baptism implied a radical change of status, a conversion which involved the passage from a religion connected to a people and to an ancestry to a universal religion. This decisive passage is a complex ritual process, an initiation rite which had an essential characteristic: the need to form, through this unique and irrepeatable act, a new man, the basis and foundation of a new sectarian society.[3]

Even if we will concentrate on Christian texts of the 4th and 5th century, the problem of the particular nature of the purification involved in the baptismal ritual was already present in Paul. Actually, his letters betray two different concepts of purity-impurity. On the one hand, in the famous passages of Romans 14, 14 and 20, he affirms that he knows and is convinced by the Lord Jesus that "there is nothing unclean in itself... all things indeed are pure", underlining in this way, in relation to food and natural elements, that no source of impurity exists. Therefore, the problem of the ritual purity has been overcome. On the other hand, we can find other passages, such as 1 Corinthians 7, 12–14, which seem characterised by the ancient material concept of impurity. The members of the *ekklesia* have gone through the baptismal bath; they are, therefore, sanctified and justified, have gone from a state of impurity to that condition of sanctity which characterises the new man. But what happens in the particular case of mixed marriages, where a holy man, a purified Christian, lives with a pagan, with a non purified man or woman? Paul's answer is clear: only if the man and the woman are purified, will their children be holy, otherwise "your children were unclean" (*akatharta*). In other words, the impurity, that now resides only in the man and no longer in the things, for Paul too continues to be something concrete and material: the materiality of the ritual impurity,

[3] See W.A. Meeks, *The Moral World of the First Christians*, Westminster Press, Philadelphia 1986, 99.

typical of the *Leviticus*, has not vanished. It is only changing its place and, therefore, its meaning.

In the *Oxyrhinchus Papyrus 840*, which contains a fragment of a lost gospel, a discussion between a high priest by the name of Levi and Jesus surrounded by his disciples is described. The setting is Jerusalem's temple and concerns the validity of the purification rites, which were requested for staying in the temple and administered with water. In this scene, the levitical rites of purification are opposed to the purification which follows the Christian baptism:

> But I and my disciples who, following you, were not bathed (*bebaptisthai*), we have washed ourselves (*bebammetha*) in waters of eternal life which come from [above].[4]

The text witnesses the change of the meaning of the bath purification: the application of the holy only in the human context involves, at the same time, a radical transformation of the meaning of the baptismal purification. What we will now look at are some aspects of this process in the subsequent history of Christian initiation: for this study, the best documentation is offered by the baptismal catecheses of the fourth and the fifth century, the golden age of the Christian baptism.[5] This was a period in which, also as a consequence of the transformation of the Church's role, the problem of the mass purification of the people entering the Church acquired a new importance. As an indication of this transformation I have decided to choose a key-element of this initiation: baptismal nudity, asking what the function of the purification played by this typical ritual element was.

Nudity and shame

We can begin our analysis with a text from the end of the 4th century. The author[6] of the *Mystagogical Catecheses*, preached in Jerusalem

[4] *Pap. Ox.* 840, 41–44, in: B.P. Grenfell – A.S. Hunt, *The Oxyrhinchus Papyri*, V, London 1908, p. 840; on this text see J. Jeremias, *Das Zusammenstoss Jesus mit dem pharisäischen Oberpriester auf dem Tempelplatz. Zu Pap. Oxyrh. V, 840*, in *Coniectanea Neotestamentica* (in honorem A. Friedrichsen), II, 1947, 97–108; Id., *Unbekannten Jesusworte*, Zwingli, Zürich 1948, 39–49.

[5] See in general V. Saxer, *Les rites de l'initiation chrétienne du II^e^ au VI^e^ siècle. Esquisse historique et signification d'après leurs principaux témoins*, Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, Spoleto 1992.

[6] For the autorship of these catecheses, I am following the proposal of V. Saxer (in his introduction to the Italian translation: *Cirillo e Giovanni di Gerusalemme, Catechesi*

at the end of the 4th century, in the second catechesis, interpreting the symbolism of the rite of the stripping off of clothes done by the newly baptised, states:

> As soon, then, as ye entered, ye put off your tunic; and this was an image of putting off the old man with his deeds. Having stripped yourselves, ye were naked; in this also imitating Christ, who was stripped naked on the cross, and by His nakedeness put off from Himself the principalities and powers, and openly triumphed over them on the tree. For since the adverse powers made their lair in your members, ye may no longer wear that old garment; I do not at all mean this visible one, but the aid man, which waxeth corrupt in the lusts of deceits. May the soul which has once put him off, never again put him on, but say with the Spouse of Christ in the Song of songs, I have put off my garment, how shall I put it on? O wondrous thing! Ye were naked in the sight of all, and were not ashamed; for truly ye bore the likeness of the first-formed Adam, who was naked in the garden, and was not ashamed.[7]

The process of taking off clothes was an essential moment of the baptismal ceremony, as it was structured during the 4th century.[8] Notwithstanding local uses, ecclesiastical traditions and other significant variables, the baptismal rite had acquired a clear structure during the 4th century, which was organised in three phases of different length and meaning.

After a period of catechumenate, which in general lasted three years, the ceremony of baptism—normally celebrated at Easter—involved a period of preparation during Lent, with a strong catechetical, ascetical and spiritual commitment, with daily individual exercises and communal liturgical rites, above all, exorcisms. At the Easter's vigil all this stopped with the celebration of the baptism, followed by the unction and the Eucharist.

The most common practice of the threefold integral immersion in a baptismal pool in front of the public of believers, involved complete ritual nakedeness for people to be baptized. Having taken off their clothes in an appointed room, they entered the baptismal room. The situation described by the author of the *Mystagogical Catecheses*,

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prebattesimali e mistagogiche, San Paolo, Milano 1994, 34f.), who identifies the author of the *Mystagogical Catecheses* as John of Jerusalem, Bishop of the Holy City from 387 to 417.

[7] *Myst. Cat.*, II, 2; (translation from the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series II, Vol. VII).

[8] For what is following see Saxer, *Rites*, 195f.

therefore, is a typical situation, witnessed since the more ancient sources, of public ritual nakedeness.[9] As a significant example we can take the *Apostolic Tradition* which, even if in an idealised way, shows the rigorous practices of the Roman community at the beginning of the third century.[10] In relation to the baptism, this also implies the complete nakedeness of the baptised. After being rigorously checked in order to preserve the purity and the holiness of the community from any type of pollution, the catechumens will be exorcised one final time by the bishop at the baptism's vigil, after which they spend the night, staying awake and receiving the last instructions. The baptismal ceremony begins at cockcrow. Having prayed by the water, they take off their clothes[11] and then are baptised. First children, then men, and lastly the women with their hair untied[12] and with no ornaments at all.

Also the following sources witness the baptismal nakedeness that was necessary above all for the integral unction of the body, but also for the total immersion in the baptismal pool.[13] It is explicitly witnessed by the Chrysostom,[14] by Theodore of Mopsuestia,[15] by Proclus of Constantinople.[16] In relation to the unction, Cyril of Jerusalem precisely states: "from the top of the head to the tips of the toes".[17]

From certain liturgical and canonical sources, we know that this nakedeness aroused some tensions and problems. Perhaps the oldest witness is the *Didascalia Apostolorum*, an early "Church Order" probably of Syriac origin, written at the beginning of the III century and aimed at defining the rights and the duties of the bishop in ruling

[9] See, for instance, *Ev. Th.*, log. 37, NHC II, pp. 39, 29–40; *Dial. Sav.*, NHC III, p. 143; *Gospel of the Egyptians*, ap. Cl. Al., *Str.*, III, 13, 93; *Act. Th.*, 121; *Act. Barn.*, 12. For the iconography, see L. De Bruyne, *L'initiation chrétienne et ses reflets dans l'art paléochrétienne*, "Revue de Sciences religieuses" 36 (1962), 27f.; E. Dassmann, art. *Battesimo. II Iconografia*, in "Dizionario patristico di antichità cristiane", I, 504.

[10] On the complex problems of the Hippolithean corpus, see as last A. Brent, *Hippolytus and the Roman Church in the Third Century: Communities in Tension Before the Emergence for Monarch-Bishop*, Brill, Leiden 1995.

[11] On the difficulty of relating this practice to the ritual nudity of the Jewish lustrations, see R.J. Zwi Werblowski, *On the Baptismal Rite according to St. Hippolytus*, in *Studia patristica*, II, Akademie Verlag, Berlin 1957, 98.

[12] See W.C. van Unnik, *Les cheveux défaits des femmes baptisées*, "Vig. Chr.", 1 (1947), 77–100.

[13] See Saxer, *Rites*, 430.

[14] *Cat.*, III, 8.

[15] XIV, pp. 401–403 Tonneau-Devreesse.

[16] IX, 49–51; ST p. 193.

[17] *Cat.*, II.

the community well. Also if the author of the *Didaschalia* leaves out the deaconesses in the administration of the baptism, founding his choice on the New Testament's precedent of the deacony of the pious women, he assigns them an important role.[18] Even if not obligatory, this intervention is rooted in reasons of "public decency", since "it is not good that women are seen (naked) by men". Therefore, it is not surprising that there are some sources witnessing separate celebration of baptism.[19]

The ritual nudity

However, in general, the solution to this problem was searched and found in the dynamics of the ritual action, more precisely in its capacity of practical control and symbolic sublimation.[20] It is in this ritual process that the nakedeness takes on a new meaning of purification.[21]

Describing the condition of the catechumen during the vigil in his catechesis, John Chrysostom observes that he is like "a solitary abode, a shelter without door, completely open to all, a place open to the incursions of criminals, a refuge for wild beasts, a dwelling for demons".[22] Behind the rhetoric of the phrase, there lies a profound truth: now, the catechumen is in a typical situation of liminality, without his old identity, under the control of the community; he is a particular place of impurity and danger which requires exorcisms and purifications.

The *Sermons* of Augustin bear a good witness to the condition of humiliation and exhaustion which characterised the peculiar journey of the person to be baptized and which culminated in ritual naked-

[18] On this point, see A.-G. Martimort, *Les diaconesses. Essai historique*, C.L.V. Edizioni liturgiche, Rome 1982, 34f. (Engl. Transl., *Deaconesses*, Ignatius Press, San Francisco 1986).

[19] See, for instance, *Const.* III, 16 18; *Test. Dom.*, 12, ed. Rahmani, p. 69.

[20] See Stanley J. Tambiah, *Culture, Thought and Social Action. An Anthropological Perspective*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge (Mass.) 1985 (I am quoting from the Italian translation, *Rituali e cultura*, Il Mulino, Bologna 1995, 137f.).

[21] On the role of the public and ritual nakedeness in antiquity one can see F. Pfister, art. *Nacktheit*, PW XVI, 1541-9; P. Brown, *Body and Society*, it. tr., *Il corpo e la società*, Einaudi, Torino 1992, 286; E. Peterson, *Frühkirche, Judentum, Gnosis*, Herder, Freiburg i. B. 1959, 337; M. Smith, *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1973, 223.

[22] *Cat.*, III, 7.

ness. First of all, these people are required to make a series of renouncements: married people must refrain from food; during the day all people must practise daily fasting; they must also refrain from wine, meat, baths, increase practices of piety such as alms, prayers and vigils. To underline the penitential character of these practices and to symbolically show their situation of liminality, the people to be baptized have a place in the church which is isolated from the other believers. Together, they must put on special penitential clothes as a symbol and confirmation of their will to leave their previous sinful existence. All this means that the catechesis and the act of belief, which culminated, two weeks before Easter, in the *redditio symboli*,[23] were not sufficient. What was requested, indeed, was a radical change of life from a particular situation of impurity to a new situation of purity. To facilitate and confirm this turning, the candidate to the baptism was subjected to two dramatic and public trials: scrutiny and exorcism.

The first[24] was a public examination of the candidates, who were thoroughly questioned about their conduct, their efforts, their eventual relapses and their progress. It was a public examination of one's conscience. In Augustin's case, another humiliating examination of the body was added, involving a physical inspection aimed to check for the presence of other physical traces of Satan. In this way, the nakedeness of the body was the means through which it was possible to verify the level of physical and material purification. At the end of this examination, the bishop could say: "We invite you to keep in your hearts the health we have witnessed present in your bodies [. . .] Now we have the proof you are unharmed by the spirit of evil".[25] In this way, Augustin's testimony reminds us of the dual nature of this baptismal purification. It was, surely, moral and religious, but also and, above all, a material purification from an impurity whose origin was now the action of the devil.

Consequently, the scrutiny was followed by an exorcism,[26] an arduous

[23] On this point see what S. Poque observes in his edition of the sermons. *Augustin d'Hippone, Sermons sur la Pâque* ("Sources Chrétiennes" 116), Cerf, Paris 1966, 26.

[24] On scrutiny see A. Dondeyne, *La discipline des scrutins dans l'Eglise latine d'avant Charlemagne*, "Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique" 28 (1932), 5–33; J. Quasten, *Ein Taufexorzismus bei Augustinus*, "Revue des Etudes Augustiniennes" 1956, 101–108. See also the definition given by Niceta of Remesiana in his *Catecheses*, I.

[25] See *Serm.*, 216, 11.

[26] On the exorcism in general see the article of K. Thraede, *Exorzismus*, in "RAC" VII (1969), cl. 44–117.

trial as witnessed by Augustin to the neophytes: "As one can say, you have been shaped from the humiliation of fasting and from the sacrament of exorcism".[27] In this way, he realised the essential aspect of the rite: through the hard and humiliating trial, as for all the initiation's rites, its aim was to transform from the inside the identity of the catechumens. The sermon 216 evokes this nightly performance, during which the *competens*, the person to be baptized, naked, with an empty stomach because of the fast, with sleepless eyes, shaking in the cool African night, kneeling on his penitential robe, lowering his head under the curses against the devil, waited for the purifying breath of the exorcist. When he received it, hearing the curses against the mysterious dweller in his body and declaring that he renounced the world, then, the old man eventually began to die. In this way, that nakedeness of the body purified and transformed itself from a place which was the source of uncleanliness (the devil) to a place of spiritual rebirth.

This performance was repeated at the Easter vigil.[28] At the end of a prayer's vigil, at cockcrow, before the Sunday mass, the person to be baptized was exorcized another time, naked and standing up on his cilice.[29] He received some insufflations from the exorcist with curses against the devil spirit; after that, he also had to spit on the devil, declaring his renouncement of him. Finally, he turned to God, reciting the symbol of faith.

During these trials, the nakedeness of the body played a central role. Also for its particular symbolic value, about which I will speak later, it was the liminal zone in which and by which the old and new encountered and then separated definitively.[30] Indeed, on the one hand, it hinted at the adamitic nakedeness, therefore, at the sin of Adam and Eve; on the other hand, the dynamics of control, purification, sublimation that the ritual process operated showed not only to the *competens*, but also to the spectators the strength of a rite which was capable of restoring the purity of the paradisiac naked-

[27] See *Serm.*, 227.

[28] See Saxer, *Rites*, 338. Poque, *Sermons*, 32–33, is of a contrary opinion.

[29] On the symbolism of this scene see Poque, *Sermons*, 28.

[30] On the symbolic values of the Christian baptism, see P. Lundberg, *La typologie du baptême dans l'ancienne Eglise*, Lorentz, Leipzig-Uppsala 1942; J. Daniélou, *Bible et liturgie. La théologie biblique des sacrements et des fêtes d'après les Pères de l'Eglise*, 2 ed., Cerf., Paris 1958.

ness through the specific purification of the naked body, definitively liberated from the impurity of the sin and its source, the devil.

The practical strength of ritual control was intimately linked to its symbolic strength. Indeed, we all know that the ritual, as a symbolic activity, gives birth to conceptions, shows ideas symbolically, it is not a sign of the emotion which transmits but its symbol. In this sense, the ritual nudity of Christian baptism, too, was an opportunity to communicate a system of symbols which contributed to the formation of the new man and, by this, to the formation of the Christian society. This system was actually an "identity card" aimed at characterizing the new Christian in his essential values, since it contained from a doctrinal, moral, eschatological point of view all that a Christian could be and, in this sense, defined what a Christian was.[31] As Proclus of Constantinople says, the person to be baptized carried the symbol of the actions which were performed on him.[32] On the other hand, he did not possess the key to understand the real meaning of these symbolic realities. As Ambrose, the Bishop of Milan, clearly states speaking to the catechumens:

> You have entered here, you have seen the water, the bishop, the levite. Perhaps someone might say: Is this all? Yes, it is, really all, here where all is innocence, all is piety, all is grace, all is sanctification. You have seen only what you can see with the bodily eyes and with the human glance, you cannot see what is really happening here, but only what is possible to see. What you do not see is much more important than what you see, since "the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor 4, 18).[33]

In this way, also the physical nakedeness, too, is captured and circulates in a symbolical system using a particular metaphorical language which alludes to the superior realities and which is capable of attributing it a new value of moral purification.

The first step in symbolic reshaping consisted of giving a Christian meaning to practices and values which were typical of the culture

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[31] See. P. Cramer, *Baptism and Change in the Early Middle Ages*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1993, 48.

[32] *Cat.*, IX, 49; ST, p. 193.

[33] *Sacr.*, I, 10. Compare the Augustinian definition of the word *sacramentum*: "Ista, fratres, ideo dicitur sacramenta, quia in eis aliud videtur, aliud intelligitur. Quod videtur, speciem habet corporalem, quod intelligitur, fructum habet spiritalem" (*Epist.*, 55, 1–2). See C. Couturier, *"Sacramentum" et "mysterium" dans l'oeuvre de S. Augustin*, in *Etudes Augustiniennes*, Paris 1953, pp. 161–332.

of the people to be baptized. So, from some baptismal preachers the ritual nakedeness was linked to the unction of the naked body, typically used by athletes. For example, John Chrysostom compares the person to be baptized to an "athlete" of Christ who is taking off his clothes to prepare himself better for the struggle against the adversary, Satan.[34] A more original interpretation of the symbolic value of ritual nakedeness and its puryfying role is given by Theodore of Mopsuestia.[35] The situation of physical stripping and of moral humiliation where it is the person to be exorcised, is compared to the situation in which it is he himself who asks for a new right of citizenship. Indeed, the catechumens, from the moment in which they asked to be inscribed for the baptism, in reality were asking to acquire that heavenly citizenship that the man had lost with original sin. Therefore, Theodore likens the different phases of the initiation process to the process of claiming this new citizenship. During the exorcisms, the person to be baptized stays silent and naked, like a supplicant, stripped of his ancient rights. Theodore likened these exorcisms to a legal trial where exorcists, like lawyers, act on behalf of their "client", attempting to expel Satan once and for all, after which the "client" assumes his new identity.

Normally, however, the symbolic process takes its themes and motives from the biblical story. The ritual nudity is actually linked to the threefold process of immersion and emersion which, applying the general meaning of death and rebirth, which is typical of the initiation process, to the Christian situation, places the catechumen in a situation of spiritual rebirth (John 3, 3–5). The baptismal basin in which the catechumen enters after taking off his clothes is, at the same time, the place of the death of this old life and the place of his new birth. More precisely, as Theodor of Mopsuestia says, it is a maternal womb and the tomb of Christ.[36] Indeed, following a suggestion from Paul,[37] the baptism has been reshaped on the basis of the death and the resurrection of Christ. In this way, following John of Jerusalem,[38] the baptismal nudity has the Christ's nudity on the cross as its model. Therefore, the person to be baptized is similar to the dead and raised from the dead Christ: as the *Apostolical*

[34] *Cat.*, II.
[35] XII, 2; p. 341; see Saxer, *Rites*, 271f.
[36] *Cat.*, 14, 5, pp. 411–13; 14, 9, p. 421.
[37] See Rom 6, 3–6; also Mc 10, 38–39.
[38] *Myst. Cat.*, II, 12.

Constitutions say, he is "crucified, put to death, raised from the dead with Christ".

John of Jerusalem remembers another important symbolical value: the nakedeness of the baptized person coincides with the restoration of the paradisiacal nakedeness. Indeed, the lack of shame can be explained by the fact that, during the time of the rite, the baptismal candidate is restored to the original adamitic innocence, a restoration made possibile by the passion of the new Adam, Christ. In this way, through the symbolism linked to the ritual nakedeness, the baptism also acquires a cosmological and an eschatological value, since it is a second creation and, at the same time, the anticipation of the eschatological paradise.[39] This is also alluded to in the symbolism of the baptismal waters, developed first of all by Tertullian in his treatise on baptism.[40] Indeed, they have been prefigurated in the genesiac waters over which the Spirit of God glided. This is a model of the rebirthing capacities of the baptismal waters in which the catechumen enters as a little fish which, as Tertullian says, "comes out from the waters in conformity with Jesus Christ, our Fish".[41]

A last symbolical theme deserves to be remembered at the conclusion of our analysis: the taking off of the white postbaptismal clothes. These clothes, that the baptized puts on at the end of the ceremony, are symbolically linked to the clothes he had taken off at the beginning: a typical Christian adaptation of the profane use of changing clothes after a bath. This use has been interpreted in different symbolical ways:[42] as a symbol of the chastity of the new life (Cyril of Jerusalem, Ambrose), of the condition of return to the paradisiacal innocence (Ephrem, Ambrose), of the baptismal grace (PseudoClementines), as armour of the Holy Spirit (Ephrem), as a wedding dress which binds the believer to Christ for ever, as a symbol of the splendor and of the glory of Adam given back to the baptized (Ephrem), as participation to the glory of the resurrection and immortality of Christ, and so on.

However, behind these variations, it is possible to make out a theme linked to the purifying function of ritual nakedeness. As Gregory

[39] *Cat.*, II, 2.

[40] *Bapt.*, 3, 4.

[41] *Bapt.*, I, 3. See F.J. Dölger, *Das Fisch-Symbol in frühchristlicher Zeit*, Aschendorf, Münster 1928.

[42] See V. Pavan, *La veste bianca battesimale*, indicium *escatologico nella chiesa dei primi secoli*, "Augustinianum" 18 (1978), 264. The textual references can be found here.

of Nyssa observes,[43] the white baptismal dress is a glorious coat of incorruptibility, a rich purple mantle which prefigures the putting on of the immortal body, which will definitively take the place of the coats of skins put on man after the original sin; thus, the soul reunites herself with her bridegroom, Christ. In this way, behind the traditional images of the deposition of the old man and of the nuptial mystic, the ethical soteriological eschatological dimensions blend together to reveal the newly found purity and incorruptibility of the baptized.

[43] See Saxer, *Rites*, 321–2.

PURIFICATION AND ITS DISCONTENTS: MANI'S REJECTION OF BAPTISM

GUY G. STROUMSA

Introduction

What happens when the means of purification from defilement which had been in use in a given religious system break down, when they are not believed to function anymore? No religious community can survive without easy reach of ways of purification, which alone permit the reintegration within the community of members declared impure, for either cultic or moral reasons. Hence the centrality, for the very identity of religious communities, of some means of purification.[1]

The example of Mani is topical, and will serve us here to understand the central function of conceptions of purity—and hence of purification—in the transformation process of religious beliefs.[2] Mani, who had grown up among a Jewish-Christian baptist community, the Elkasaites, rejected in his youth the validity of the baptists' ritual, and in particular of their daily purifying ablutions.[3] The young Mani turned against both the practices and the underlying beliefs of the baptist sect, and soon offered an alternative to their cultic behaviour as well as to their articles of faith. This alternative not only

[1] For one of the few attempts to tackle the problem from different points of view, see *Guilt or Pollution and Rites of Purification* (= Proceedings of the XIth International Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions, vol. II; Leiden, 1968). From a comparative perspective, see also "Purification", *ER* 12, 91ff. "Reinigungen", *RGG* 5, 946ff.; and especially "Pureté et impureté; I. L'histoire des religions", *Supplément au Dictionnaire de la Bible* 19, 398–430.

[2] Oddly enough, it seems that little has been done on the topic. For a rather general statement of the problem, see the abstract by L.J.R. Ort, "Guilt and Purification in Manichaeism," in *Guilt or Pollution*, 69.

[3] See A. Henrichs, "Mani and the Babylonian Baptists: A Historical Confrontation," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 77 (1973), 23–59. On the Elkasaites, see L. Cirillo, *Elchasai e gli Elchasaiti: un contributo* alla storia delle comunita giudeocristiane (Cosenza, 1984) and G.P. Luttikhuizen, *The Revelation of Elchasai: Investigations into the Evidence for a Mesopotamian Jewish Apocalypse of the Second Century and its Reception by Judeo-Christian Propagandists* (Tübingen, 1985). Both works provide detailed analyses of the heresiological sources (Luttikhuizen does not refer to Cirillo's study).

took the form of a new cult, but offered a complete system of the universe, which integrated cosmogony, cosmology and world history into a complex web of myths. Indeed, it is the very birth of the Manichaean religion which can be observed hatching out of a polemic focusing precisely upon the concepts of purity, impurity and purification. An inquiry focusing upon Mani's rejection of baptism should then help us understand better the nature of his new approach. Mani offered nothing less than a religious *revolution*, which is sometimes (as in the so-called *Cologne Mani Codex* [= *CMC*]) framed in terms of a radical *reformation* of the cult, advocating a return to the original teaching distorted by mistaken believers.

To a great extent, however, the attempt to dissociate between beliefs and praxis is misleading. Mani did not reject the cultic practices of the Elkasaites while retaining their fundamental beliefs—although this is what some of the texts would seem to suggest. He rejected their religious *praxis* precisely because it entailed some anthropological presuppositions which he did not accept. Hence, it is the very validity of the Elkasaites' religious system that the young Mani radically questionned.

1. *The text*

With the discovery and publication of the *CMC*, we are fortunate to possess now a detailed and impressive testimony of the deep crisis into which Mani threw the community when he expressed serious doubts as to the value of Elkasaite "law."[4] I propose to reflect here on a particularly pregnant passage concerning the validity of the washings. The text is here put under the name of Baraies the Teacher, a Manichaean leader of the first generation.

[4] *Nomos*, e.g., 89,12. Cf. "their every ordinance and order according to which they walk (*kath' hèn poreuontai*)" (80,3–5; the expression reflects a linguistic calque of Hebrew *halakhah*, i.e., the legal system of religious duties). I quote CMC according to the translation of R. Cameron and A.J. Dewey, *The Cologne Mani Codex (P. Colon. inv. nr. 4780) "Concerning the Origin of his Body"* (Missoula, Mont., 1979). See also the editio princeps and commentary of L. Koenen and A. Henrichs in *ZPE* 32 (1978), 87–199 (for *CMC*, 72,8–99,9). For a critical edition, see L. Koenen and C. Römer, *Der Kölner Mani-Kodex* (Abhandlungen der rheinisch-westfälischen Akademie der Wissenschaften; Opladen, 1988).

> My lord (Mani) said: "I have had enough debating [with] each one in that Law, rising up and questioning them [concerning the] way of God, [the] commandments of the Savior, the washing (*peri tou baptismatos*), the vegetables they wash, and their every ordinance and order according to which they walk.
>
> Now I destroyed and [put to nought] their words and their mysteries, demonstrating to them that they had not received these things which they pursue from the commandments of the Savior; some of them were amazed at me, but others got cross and angrily said: "does he not want to go to the Greeks?" But, when I saw their intent, I said to [them] gently: "[This] washing (*to baptisma*) by which you wash your food is of [no avail] (*ouden tugchanei*). For this body is defiled (*miaron*) and molded from a mold of defilement . . . [79,13–80,3]

Mani then justifies his statement about the uselessness of the washing of vegetables through the intestinal transformation of food.

> Likewise, the loathsomeness and dregs of both [types of food] are seen as not differing from each other, so that what has been washed, which [it (the body) rejected] and sloughed off, is not at all distinguishable from that [other] which is unwashed. [81,13–24]

Mani goes on to submit the daily washings of the baptists to the same scathing critique:

> Now the fact that you wash in water (*baptisesthe en hudasin*) each day is of no avail. For having been washed and purified once and for all, why do you wash again each day? So that also by this it is manifest that you are disgusted with yourselves each day and that you must wash yourselves on account of loathsomeness (*dia tèn bdelurotèta baptisesthai*) before you can become purified. And by this too it is clear most evidently that all the foulness is from the body. And, indeed, [you] have put it (i.e., the body) on.
>
> Therefore, [make an inspection of] yourselves as to [what] your purity (*katharotès*) [really is. For it is] impossible to purify your bodies entirely (*adunaton gar ta sômata humôn pantelôs katharisai*)—for each day the body is disturbed and comes to rest through the excretions of feces from it—so that the action comes about without a commandment from the Savior. The purity, then, which was spoken about, is that which comes through knowledge (*dia tès gnoseôs*) a separation (*chorismos*) of light from darkness, of death from life, of living waters from turbid, so that [you] may know [that] each is [. . .] one another and [. . .] the commandments of the Savior, [so that . . .] might redeem the soul from [annihilation] and destruction. This is in truth the genuine purity (*hè kat' alètheian euthutatè katharotès*), which you were commended to do; but you departed from it and began to bathe, and have held on to the purification of the body, (a thing) most defiled and fashioned through

> foulness; through it (i.e., foulness) it (the body) was coagulated and having been founded came into existence. [82,23–85,12]

The text goes on to state that it is precisely these words of the young Mani which sparked the split within the community: while some were deeply impressed and regarded him as "a prophet and teacher," others became "filled with jealousy and rage, some of whom were voting for (my) death." Mani was summoned and accused of destroying "the washing of our Law and that of the fathers," as well as the commandments of the Savior. Of course, he denied doing this last thing, claiming on the contrary that he was the real follower of the Savior, i.e., Jesus. [90–91].

To be sure, this extremely rich text should not be understood as quoting Mani's *ipsissima verba*. We deal here with a later reconstruction, written by a Manichaean author, perhaps one generation after Mani, describing the beginning of his teaching. In many ways, indeed, the *CMC* can be considered to be an official biography of the prophet. In that sense, we cannot expect our text to reveal the true motifs of Mani's break with the baptists. But it does offer us a very important insight about the justification of this break for the first generation of Manichaean teachers, perhaps for the later Mani himself.

2. *Elkasaite baptism*

In order to better understand the nature of Mani's stance, we must assess with some precision that which he rejects. What do we know about Elkasaite baptism? From our sources, mainly a few reports by Patristic heresiographers, we know that the Elkasaites practiced various kinds of purifying ablutions: side by side with the washing of vegetables, they practiced an initiatory sacramental baptism, which was meant for the remission of sins, as well as daily baths.[5]

Although various features distinguished the Elkasaites from the other baptist groups swarming in the Near East in the second and third centuries, including the Mandeans, they can quite safely be identified as a rather special branch of Jewish-Christians.[6] Their reli-

[5] See Henrichs, "Mani and the Babylonian Baptists," esp. 46–47, on the concordance between the data of the heresiologists and those of *CMC*.

[6] On the various baptists groups, see K. Rudolph, *Antike Baptisten: zu den Überlieferungen über frühjüdische und christlische Taufsekten* (Sitzungsberichte des sächsichen

gious way of life is called *nomos* in *CMC*, which refers to the baptists' "ancestral traditions." As pointed out by Gerard P. Luttikhuizen, "these features suggest that the ritualistic piety of the baptists had developed from Jewish roots."[7] On the other hand, some Christian elements are clearly present. They shared the practice of daily baths with other Jewish-Christian groups, such as the Hemerobaptists and the Ebionites (who also practiced a sacramental baptism). Indeed, one can say, with Luigi Cirillo, that Elkasaism represents one of the most important manifestations of the Baptist movement stemming from Palestine, and also its most northern branch.[8]

The reference to the purifying role of the various ablutions does not in itself make clear that the various baptismal rites were used as a therapy against both spiritual and physical evils. This fact emphasizes an important characteristic of their anthropology (which was, of course, not only their own, but was widely spread across the spectrum of highly diverse religious and cultural groups): there is a continuum between the body and the spirit, and hence there is no hiatus between physical and ethical or spiritual purity.[9]

The development of the *paenitentia secunda*, or the second baptism, meant to cleanse the sinner, one of the most notoriously complex questions in early Christianity, cannot be discussed here.[10] Such a second baptism, for the forgiveness of sins, was also known to the Elkasaites—an oddity, it would seem, since there was no dearth of opportunities for cleansing ablutions in their religious system. According to Hippolytus, the *Book of Elchasai* mentioned seven witnesses to the second baptism, intended for the remission of sins. [*Ref.* IX.15.1–2]:

Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, Phil.-hist. Klasse, 121.4; Berlin, 1981). See further Rudolph, "Jüdische und christliche Täufertraditionen im Spiegel des CMC," in L. Cirillo, ed., *Codex Manichaicus Coloniensis: Atti del Simposio Internazionale* (Cosenza, 1986), 69–80, and G. Strecker, "Das Judenchristentum und der Manikodex," *ibid.*, 81–96.

[7] *The Revelation of Elchasai*, 164.

[8] "Elchasaiti e battisti di Mani: i limiti di un confronto delle fonti," in Cirillo, ed., *Codex Manichaicus Coloniensis*, 111.

[9] Jean Daniélou suggests that Elchasaite baptism might also have been an act of reconciliation, which could however have been suppressed later because of the ambiguity with the first, initiatory baptism; see his *Théologie du Judéo-Christianisme* (Paris, 1991 [2nd. ed.], 100.

[10] See G. Stroumsa, "From Repentance to Penance in Early Christianity: Tertullian's *De Paenitentia* in Context," in G.G. Stroumsa, *Barbarian Philosophy: the Religious Revolution of Early Christianity* (Tübingen, 1999).

> If therefore, children, someone has had intercourse with any animal or with a male or a sister or a daughter, or if he has committed adultery or fornication, and wishes to receive remission of his sins, let him, as soon as he has heard this book, be baptised a second time in the name of the great and most high God and in the name of his Son, the Great King. Let him purify and cleanse himself (*katharisatô kai agneusatô*) and let him call to witness the seven witnesses written in this book: the heaven and the water and the holy spirits and the angels of prayer and the oil and the salt and the earth.

This text reveals clearly that the sins for which one needs to be cleansed through immersion are all of a sexual nature. Epiphanius too mentions Elxai's seven witnesses for oaths.[11] The seven witnesses do not seem to appear elsewhere. From ancient Near Eastern literature, however, we know that heaven and earth can often be called to witness solemn oaths.[12] Moreover, the seven witnesses to the baptismal rite recall the five seals (*sphrageis*) to gnostic baptism as described in the *Apocryphon of John*.[13] In the various literatures of the ancient Near East, "seal" usually refers to an attestation, an authentification.[14] Hence, one can say that "seal" and "witness" perform similar functions on the solemn occasion of an oath or a lustration. One may speculate that the origin of the Manichaean conception of seals *replacing* baptism may find its origin in the witnesses/seals *accompanying* solemn baptism among Elkasaites and various Gnostic groups.

3. *Mani's rejection of baptism and its Gnostic background*

It is to the repeated ablutions, as well as to the washing of the food, that Mani objects. Our text does not mention the initiatory baptism, but from Mani's arguments, it is hard to believe that it would have fared any better than the others. According to him (or more precisely to the words put into his mouth by Baraies), these ablutions do not work, since water is incapable of purifying either the food or the body. The reason given is the same in both cases: the diges-

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[11] Pan. 19.6, on the Osseans. See Luttikhuizen, *The Revelation of Elchasai*, 126 and 199–200.

[12] See M. Delcor, "Les attaches littéraires, l'origine et la signification de l'expression biblique 'prendre à témoin le ciel et la terre'," *VT* 16 (1966), 8–25.

[13] NHC II, 31:11–27; see J.-M. Sevrin, *Le dossier baptismal séthien: études sur la sacramentaire gnostique* (Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi; Québec, 1986), 31–37.

[14] See G. Stroumsa, *Savoir et salut* (Paris), 275–288.

tion process shows the body to be irremediably impure. But Mani does not reject the very notions of purity and impurity, and hence of purification. In that sense, what he proposes appears more like a reform: going back to the real intentions of the Savior, which were forgotten in the baptists' mistaken conceptions. Purification is necessary, and also possible, provided one does not try to purify the body, through water, but rather the soul, through what the text calls *gnosis*, salvific knowledge. Incidentally, Mani's rejection of physical baptism also meant that he denied Jesus's baptism; according to our sources, indeed, such a baptism would have indicated his sinfulness.[15]

What is the nature of this *gnosis*? Although our text is not explicit here, it stands to reason to assume that it is the knowledge of Manichaean mythological theology, for which impurity lies in the very mixture of light particles with matter in the physical, created world. Hence, real purification would mean understanding the cause of impurity, and the attempt to restore the original separation (*chorismos*) between the elements of light and those of matter. The whole Manichaean religion, indeed, its cult as well as its mythology, is precisely aimed at dismantling the impure *mixis* through which our world came to be.

In Manichaean doctrine, there are two ways of speaking of impurity. On the one hand, impurity is the very *mixis* between the two realms, the realm of light and the realm of darkness. In a more basic sense, however, the realm of darkness, by itself, is impure. Purification, therefore, will essentially consist in the separation of the two realms, achieved through *gnosis*, i.e., the purification of the light elements. This is not attained though a purely intellectual process of knowledge, but also through Manichaean cultic practices: Manichaeism is a full-fledged religion, not a philosophical system.

Mani's radical rejection of baptism and its replacement by *gnosis* should be understood within the context of Gnostic traditions. There are indeed some quite striking Gnostic parallels to Mani's rejection of baptism. In the earliest strata of Gnosticism, moreover, there seems to have been an obsession with purity and purification from pollution. The centrality of "saving knowledge" probably developed at later stages of the movement.[16]

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[15] Acta Archelai 60.11; Augustine, *Contra Faustum* 23.3; references in Henrichs-Koenen, *ZPE* 32 (1978), 143, n. 204.

[16] See the conclusions of G. Stroumsa, *Another Seed: Studies in Gnostic Mythology* (Nag Hammadi Studies, 24; Leiden, 1984).

In a seminal study, Ludwig Koenen was able to show that the theme of the metaphorization of baptism is widespread in various Gnostic texts from Nag Hammadi as well as in traditions in the heresiological literature.[17] His analysis also reflects the strong vitality of baptismal rites, even among Gnostic groups. It is precisely with the background of this vitality that the movement of reaction can be understood. There is no need to repeat here Koenen's results. Let us only refer to texts such as the *Paraphrase of Shem*, the *Testimony of Truth*, the *Exegesis of the Soul* (which understands the biblical baptism of repentance in a metaphorical way), as well as the rejection of baptism by the Valentinians, or the reference to "dark and filthy waters" by Hippolytus's Sethians.

4. *Christian origins of Mani's attitude?*

In their detailed commentary to the *CMC*, Henrichs and Koenen state that Mani's reinterpretation of baptism into *gnosis* stands at the end of a long historical evolution. According to them, the rejection of baptism by various Gnostic thinkers finds its ultimate origin in Jesus's polemics against the Pharisaic purity rites.[18]

Henrichs and Koenen state that Mani's claim that the daily washings only emphasize the uselessness of the first baptism finds its origin in the *Letter to the Hebrews* 10:1–4, esp. 10:2:

> For then would they [i.e., the sacrifices] not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged (*hapax kekatharismenous*) should have had no more conscience of sins (*suneidèsin hamartiôn*).

In *Hebrews*, the yearly sacrifices are replaced by the single sacrifice of Christ, whose blood purifies the conscience of the believers, rather than their flesh (Heb 9:12–14: *kathariei tèn suneidèsin hèmôn*) of dead works.

There are some other New Testament parallels to Mani's objection to the washings. One may think of Peter's vision of the impure food (Acts 10:9–16): "What God has cleansed, that call not thou

[17] L. Koenen, "From Baptism to the Gnosis of Manichaeism," in B. Layton, ed., *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism, II: Sethian Gnosticism* (Leiden, 1981), 734–756.

[18] *ZPE* 32 (1978), 142, n. 198; 145, n. 206; see further Koenen, "From Baptism to the Gnosis of Manichaeism", esp. 749ff.

common (*ha ho theos ekatharisen, su mè koinou*)." Similarly, Paul states (Rom 14:14) that "nothing is in itself impure (*koinon*)."[19]

Such positions would appear to be in direct relationship with the famous words of Jesus in his polemics against the Pharisees' purity laws (Mark 7:14–23; Mat 15:10–20):

> There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile (*koinôsai*) him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile that man. (Mark 7:15; cf. Mat 15:11, 20)

The reason given by Jesus to the lack of defiling power of food is based upon the fact of digestion:

> And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him; because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught . . . (Mark 7:18–19; cf. Mat 15:16–18)

The similarity is indeed striking between this argumentation and that butressing Mani's claim that baptism by water cannot cleanse, since the body remains bound to perform the same activity of defecation, with or without ablutions. It is this similarity which has brought the learned editors of *CMC* to relate Mani's claim that the body cannot be cleansed to Jesus's words.

What *does* defile man are the evil thoughts which come out of his heart, as well as "adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, and evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness" (Mark 7:21–22; cf. Mat 15:19–20).

Together with its parallel in Matthew, this passage of Mark is usually considered as the *locus classicus* of Jesus's radical rejection of the very foundations of "Mosaic Law," of the entire Jewish halakhic system.[20] Similarly, Herbert Braun can claim: "Das extrem Unjüdische dieser Position sichert die Echtheit eines Jesuswortes wie Markus 7,15."[21] For the New Testament scholars who share this opinion, the

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[19] *koinon* renders the Hebrew *hulin*. On Mani and Paul, see H.-D. Betz, "Paul in Mani's Biography (Codex Manichaicus Coloniensis)", in Cirillo, ed., *Codex Manichaicus Coloniensis*, 215–234.

[20] "Nirgendwo aber zeigt sich die Radikalität von Jesu Einstellung zur Tora deutlicher als im Streit um das Reinheitsgesetz," states for instance Günter Klein, in "Gesetz," III, *TRE* 13, 59.

[21] Quoted by W.G. Kümmel, "Äussere und innere Reinheit des Menschen bei Jesus," (1973), reprinted in his *Heilsgeschehen und Geschichte, II* (Marburger Theologische Studien 16; Marburg, 1978), 117–129.

fact that these words can plausibly be considered as Jesus's *ipsissima verba* is highly significant, since it emphasizes Jesus's "souveräne Stellung . . . zur Thora," in Kümmel's words. Although this perception is fairly common, it is highly inadequate, as we shall see.

The hypothesis according to which the rejection of baptism finds its ultimate origins in Jesus's doctrine seems to have been accepted without question. It is, however, rather puzzling, if not altogether paradoxical: after all, Jesus is at the origin of the exportation of baptismal rites from Judea to the world at large. Some serious arguments may be adduced against it.

First of all, the hypothesis does not take into account the fact that the critique of Israelite ritual and doubts upon its value when it is not accompanied by the right attitude of mind, is known already from the Hebrew Bible, and is well attested in the Prophets and in the Psalms. Psalm 51, for instance, deals with the impossibility of expiation for a sin through the normal method of sacrifice when the Temple is destroyed.[22] Philo, too, insists upon the need for unity between body and soul with respect to the pure intention accompanying sacrifices.[23] The necessity of moral cleanliness together with ritual purity is emphasized in various Jewish texts from the Second Temple period.[24] Jacob Neusner has argued convincingly that the most important point for understanding the idea of purity in ancient Judaism is the relationship between physical and moral purity.[25]

The same is true at Qumran, where the scrupulous observance of ritual laws concerning purity and impurity is directly related to the obsession of the members of the sect by the idea of the physical defilement produced by moral fault.[26] As David Flusser has argued,

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[22] See A. Caquot, "Ablution et sacrifice selon le Psaume LI", in *Guilt or Pollution and Rites of Purification*, 74–77.

[23] See H. Wenschkewitz, *Die Spiritualisierung der Kultusbegriffe: Tempel, Priester und Opfer im Neuen Testament* (Angelos 4; Leipzig, 1932), ch. 3.

[24] See for instance A. Brody, "On the Development and Shifting of Motives in the Israelitic-Jewish Conceptions of Clean and Unclean," in S. Löwinger, A. Scheiber, J. Somogyi, eds., *Ignace Goldziher Memorial Volume, II* (Jerusalem, 1958), 111–126.

[25] *The Idea of Purity in Ancient Judaism* (Studies in Ancient Judaism 1; Leiden, 1973), esp. 125.

[26] See A. Dupont Sommer, "Culpabilité et rites de purification dans la secte juive de Qumran," in *Guilt or Pollution and Rites of Purification*, esp. 79. See further F. Garcia Martinez, "Les limites de la communauté: pureté et impureté à Qumran et

a similar relationship between ritual and ethical purity is found at Qumran and in John the Baptist.[27] This Jewish traditional attitude is the background of Jesus's attack against the inadequacy of Jewish ritual purity laws:

> And the Lord said unto him: "Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness." (Luke 11:39 cf. Mat 23:25–26)

Obviously, such a text does not deny the legitimacy of the purity rules, but insists that their validity is conditioned upon a complete conjunction between inner intention and cultic action. Such a demand is similar to that of the prophets, who "had nothing to object to sacrifice, provided it was carried out with a clean mind and with due esteem for law and justice."[28] It may be noted here that a similar trend is found in classical Greece with regard to rituals of purification. As emphasized by Walter Burkert, Plato's statement: "The impure man is whoever is wicked in his soul," or the inscription over the entrance of the Asclepios sanctuary at Epidauros: 'Purity is to think pious things' "were regarded not as devaluing the outer forms of piety, which were still rigorously upheld, but as adding a deeper dimension. In the sphere of purification, ritual and ethical reflection could therefore emerge without a break."[29]

From the prophets on, this insistence upon inward, moral purity, side by side with the continued development of the ritual washings which have their ultimate roots in Leviticus, is found time and again in Jewish texts.[30] From apocryphal literature, through Philo, and up to Targumic and Rabbinic literature, we can follow a continuous

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dans le Nouveau Testament," in T. Baarda et al., eds., *Text and Testimony: Essays in honor of A.F.J. Klijn* (Kampen, 1988), 11 = 122.

[27] "John's Baptism and the Dead Sea Sect," in Flusser, *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity* (Tel Aviv, 1979), 81–112, esp. 87 (Hebrew).

[28] Brody, "On the Development and Shifting of Motives," 122. For some reflexions on the "purity of the heart" for Jesus, see H.D. Betz, "Jesus and the Purity of the Temple (Mark 11:15–18): a Comparative Religion Approach," *JBL* 116 (1997), 455–472.

[29] Leg. 716e; cf. Eur., Or. 1604, Aristoph. Ram. 355. These texts are quoted by W. Burkert, *Greek Religion in the Archaic and Classical Period* (Cambridge, Mass., 1984), 77.

[30] On the common roots of Jewish and Christian baptism, see A. Yarbro Collins, "The Origin of Christian Baptism," in her *Cosmology and Eschatology in Jewish and Christian Apocalypticism* (Suppl. to the *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 50; Leiden, . . ., 1996), 218–238.

trend "spiritualizing" the cultic concepts, and insisting upon inward purity as a *conditio sine qua non* for the legitimacy and functionning of the ritual purity laws.[31]

Moreover, the New Testament texts nowhere allude to a possible rejection of baptism itself. On the contrary, the importance of Jewish baptismal practices is much enhanced in their reinterpretation in early Christian baptism.[32] As we have already seen, what we have in Jesus's polemics with the Pharisees is rather a demand that cultic practices not be disconnected from an interior, ethical, purified mind. One cannot therefore simply speak of a clear, radical opposition to external purification rituals in the New Testament. In the conclusion of a careful study of Jesus and the purity laws, Roger Booth states: "Jesus did not deny the concept of cultic purity absolutely, but only relatively in comparison with ethical purity." In other words, Jesus "did not deny the fact of cultic impurity . . ., but only treated it as of less gravity than moral impurity."[33] Similarly, analyzing the idea of purity of the heart in the Beatitudes, Jacques Dupont concludes that there is no opposition between ritual and moral purity.[34] Hence, in different ways, and from various points of view, a great number of scholars seem to reject the traditional perception of a Jesus in direct and radical opposition to the Jewish ritual system.

The same trend of insisting upon the internalization of cultic behaviour is found later, in Patristic literature. At the end of the second century, for instance, Tertullian insists that the purification of the soul must be parallel to bodily purification: "Is it reasonable to pray after having washed one's hands, but with a defiled mind?".[35]

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[31] See esp. Wenschkewitz, *Die Spiritualisierung der Kultusbegriffe, passim.* Let us mention here, at least, Philo, *Vita Mosis* II.24; see also the references in Strack-Billerbeck I s.v. Mat 15:11, 719ff. esp. R. Meir, in *Berakhot* 17a: "Keep thy mouth from every sin, and purify thyself from all sin and guilt; for I shall be with thee everywhere.", cf. *Sanhedrin* 65b, "spirit of purity, not of impurity."

[32] See Yarbro Collins, "The Origins of Christian Baptism."

[33] R.P. Booth, *Jesus and the Laws of Purity: Tradition History and Legal History in Mark 7* (JSNT, Suppl. Series 13; Sheffield, 1986), 211.

[34] J. Dupont, *Les Béatitudes, III* (Etudes Bibliques 56; Paris, 1973), 590. See also C. Spicq, O.P., *Théologie morale du Nouveau Testament* (Etudes Bibliques 51.1; Paris, 1965), 202–203, on the purification of conscience from sin in the New Testament. For an excellent overview of the problem, see E. Cothenet, "Pureté et impureté, III Nouveau Testament", *Suppl. au Dictionnaire de la Bible*, 19, 508–554.

[35] *On Prayer*, XIII.1. On interior *katharsis*, which is identical with *metanoia*, cf. Clement, *Strom.*, IV.22.143.1. Both texts are quoted in H. Karpp, *La pénitence*

In other words, and in radical contrast with Mani, Jesus does not demand a radical separation of the elements of light from those of darkness, of soul from body. On the contrary, he asks for purification of conscience, i.e., a unification of the person, soul and body, in order to avoid *dipsuchia*, the disconnection between beliefs and behavior.

Moreover, contrary to the *opinio communis*, the idea of ritual impurity was retained in early Christianity, as Marcel Simon convincingly argued.[36] In early Christian context, *porneia* involved a defilement that was ritual in nature, rather than moral. The Christian insistence on the essential unity of the human composite presented a new anthropology, but more within the Greco-Roman world than in Jewish context.[37] This new anthropology was reflected also in the new Christian practice of burying the dead *intra muros*.[38] A similar revolution in the attitude to the dead body was reflected in the Christian practice of burial *ad sanctos*, which represented a radical break with old habits in the various Mediterranean societies.[39]

Mani, on the other side, did not conceive the possibility of unification between soul and body. Since the human composite is an unnatural *mixis*, due to evil archons, the only possible salvation entails a complete separation of body from soul. We have here an anthropology established on a quite different basis. The radical encratism reflected in this kind of anthropology is usually explained, genetically, as the end of a radical evolution originally stemming from some elements within the Biblical (Jewish and early Christian) traditions. Yet, it may also reflect an influence from a quite different source.

(Neuchâtel, 1970), 166–177 and 138–139. For Origen's discussion of ritual purity, see F. Cocchini, "La normativa sul culto e sulla purita rituale nella interpretazione di Origene," *Annali di Storia dell'Esegesi* 13 (1996), 143–158. On Clement, see further A. Baumgarten, "Josephus and Hippolytus on the Pharisees," *HUCA* 55 (184), 12–13.

[36] M. Simon, "Souillure morale et souillure rituelle dans le Christianisme primitif," in *Guilt or Pollution and Rites of Purification*, 87–88.

[37] See Stroumsa, *Savoir et salut*, 199–223.

[38] See G. Dagron, "Le christianisme dans la ville byzantine," *DOP* 31, (1977), 11–19, who states: "La levée de l'interdit religieux sur la sépulture *intra muros* vieux d'un millénaire . . . est le signe d'une véritable mutation historique", quoted by P. Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago, 1981), 133, n. 16.

[39] R. Parker, *Miasma: Pollution and Purification in early Greek Religion* (Oxford, 1983), 71, who refers to. Ph. Ariès, *The Hour of our Death*, 30–40, for the origins of the depositio *ad sanctos*.

7. *A Buddhist origin?*

I wish here to call here attention to an early Buddhist text, which offers a striking parallel, as yet unnoticed, to Mani's objections to baptism:

> Thus have I heard: On a certain occasion the Exalted One was staying near Gayâ, on Gayâ Head. Now on that occasion a great number of ascetics, on the cold winter between the eighths in time of snowfall,[40] were plunging up and down [in the water] and sprinkling and burning sacrifice, thinking: This way comes purity.
>
> Now the Exalted One saw that great number of ascetics so doing, and at that time, seeing the meaning of it, gave utterance to this verse of uplift:
>
> *Not by water is one pure, tho' many folk bathe here.*
> *In whom is truth and dhamma, he is pure and he's a brâhmin.*

This Pali text, which I quote in F.L. Woodeard's translation, is taken from the *Udâna*, the third book (of fifteen) of the *Khuddaka-nikaya*, which is the fifth collection of the Pali *Sutta Pitaka*.[41] It is a collection of eighty inspired verses reportedly uttered by the Buddha himself. Each verse is preceded by a short anecdote that more or less sets forth the occasion for the utterance.

In other words, we have here, at least from a phenomenological point of view, a rather precise parallel to Mani's argument against the purifying capacity of water in *CMC*. Like Mani, Buddha rejects the ablutions of the ascetics around him, claiming that water cannot purify the body. This parallel strikes me as much closer to any of Jesus's *logoi*. None of these, after all, refers to the cleansing power of water. To be sure, Buddha's utterances in this text can no more be considered *ipsissima verba* than Mani's in *CMC*. But the real question is whether we have here more than a phenomenological parallel, namely a possible source for the early Manichaean rejection of baptism. Although they cannot be dated with precision, the texts of

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[40] I.e., the eighth day before and after full moon of the months equivalent to Jaunary and February.

[41] I quote the translation of F.L. Woodward, *The Minor Anthologies of the Pali Canon, II: Udâna: Verses of Uplift* (London, 1948), 7–8. On the Udâna, see further F.E. Reynolds, *A Guide to the Buddhist Religion* (Boston, 19981), 102, and K.R. Norman, *Pâli Literature* (Wiesbaden, 1983), 60–61. In a different context, our passage was already quoted by I. Scheftelowitz, "Die Sündentilgung durch Wasser," *ARW* 17 (1914), 353–412; see 369.

the Pali canon are early. They were certainly in existence before the third century C.E., and Mani might well have heard similar arguments when he spent time in Buddhist kingdoms of Northern India. Al-Biruni, who is generally an accurate and well-informed writer, tells us that Mani had gone to India after having been exiled from the Sasanian empire, adding that he learned there, from the Hindus, the doctrine of metempsychosis, which he then adapted to his own system.[42] Al-Biruni mentions the Hindus, but Mani could of course have heard about metempsychosis from the Buddhists as well, in whose system *samsara* plays a major role. Although his trip took place after his break with the community of his youth, he may have found there also a theoretical justification for his opposition to the baptist practices of the Elkasaites.

The once fashionable view that Mani's syncretism amalgamated elements taken from Zoroastrianism and Buddhism as well as from Christianity has long ceased to be popular. With good reason, most scholars focus today upon the Jewish-Christian and Gnostic texts, which provide Mani's immediate religious background. Despite the few times the Buddha is mentioned in the Coptic *Kephalaia* (*Keph.* I, p. 33, l. 17; the text was probably written in the first generation after Mani), the scholarly consensus today is that "Buddhist elements [in Manichaeism] were acquired in the course of mission, and were not fundamental to Manichaeism."[43]

In itself, the striking parallel on the powerlessness of water is insufficient to break this consensus. However, it is worth calling attention to yet another similarity between the earliest stages of Manichaean doctrine and Buddhist traits, side by side with metempsychosis and the denigration of the cleansing power of water. I am refering to the idea and practice of monasticism, and, more specifically, to the monastic community perceived as the real nucleus of the religious community, the *samgha*, while married people are looked upon as supporters, "fellow travellers," rather than first-class members of the community. Years ago, I argued that, since we know of the existence of Manichaean monasteries in Egypt a few decades before the

[42] References given by S.N.C. Lieu, *Manichaeism in the Later Roman Empire and Medieval China: A Historical Survey* (Manchester, 1985), 56.

[43] Lieu, *Manichaeism*, 53–54. For a synthetic study of the question, see H.-J. Klimkeit, *Die Begegnung von Christentum, Gnosis und Buddhismus an der Seidenstrasse* (Opladen, 1986).

first appearance of Christian monasticism, the former might well have provided a catalyst for the emergence of the latter. Furthermore, I postulated a Buddhist influence, acquired by Mani himself during his stay in northern India, upon the idea of *electi* and *auditores*.[44] There seems, therefore, to be mounting circumstancial evidence calling up for a revision of the consensus denying any serious Buddhist (or perhaps also Jain) influence upon nascent Manichaeism.[45]

The history of religions offers many examples of sects emerging from broad religious traditions. Since Troeltsch, the sociology of religions has learned to analyse the conditions within which sects are born and can grow. What is much less common, however, is the mutation through which out of a sectarian milieu emerges a full-fledged religion, with ecumenical ambitions. This is exactly what the birth of Manichaeism offers: a very special case study for historians of religions. In her well-known thesis, propounded a generation ago,[46] Mary Douglas argued that rules of purity and impurity (and hence rituals of purification) develop especially in societies which must avoid contacts with the world at large in order to survive. Mani's rejection of Elkasaite baptismal practices tends to sharpen Douglas's underlying thesis. Indeed, rituals of purification often seem to be central in the self-definition of religious groups, and calling the value of these rituals into question may bring to a radical transformation of the group's identity.

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[44] Stroumsa, *Savoir et salut*, 299–327.

[45] The best study of the topic is W. Sundermann, "Mani, India and the Manichaean Religion," *South Asian Studies* 2 (1986), 11–19. See further W. Sundermann, "Manichaeism Meets Buddhism: The Problem of Buddhist Influence on Manichaeism," in P. Kiefer-Pülz and J.-U. Hartmann, eds., *Bauddhavidyasudhakarah, Studies in Honor of Heinz Bechert* (Swisttal-Odendorf, 1997), 647–656. Sundermann remains skeptical as to the possible Buddhist influences upon Mani, and thinks that during his stay in India, Mani taught rather than learned. See also J. Ries, "Buddhism and Manichaeism, the Stages of an Inquiry," *Buddhist Studies Review* 111 (1986), 108ff. (= "Bouddhisme et manichéisme, les étapes d'une recherche," in *Indianisme et bouddhisme, Mélanges Etienne Lamotte* [Louvain la Neuve, 1980], 281–295).

[46] *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London, 1966).

ASPECTS OF SIN IN THE MONASTIC SCHOOL OF GAZA

ARYEH KOFSKY

Monastic life, and especially hermitic monasticism, was often conceived of as a separation from the sinful reality of the external world and its allurements, and from the past corrupt existence of the individual monk, leaving behind the "old man" and being transformed into a "new man" by spiritual rebirth. Paradoxically, however, the new social and psychological conditions did not diminish the ascetic's self-awareness of sin but actually intensified it and even turned it into a lifelong preoccupation. The new self-imposed seclusion, which perhaps caused what psychologists call a shrinkage of the self,[1] apparently did not also result in a corresponding shrinkage of the consciousness of sin. Evagrius of Pontus, the first and great theorist and psychologist of Egyptian hermitic monasticism, distinguished between sins of action and sins of thought. According to him, the hermit moved from the former to the latter because the reality of desert asceticism neutralized the possibility for operational sins.[2] These mental sins are committed through the medium of the passions, which Evagrius classified into eight vices, later to become the famous seven deadly sins.[3] It is this intensive preoccupation with the passions, notably via sexual fantasies, that so captivated Anatole France in his novel *Thaïs*.[4] In fact, to some hermits their whole monastic life seemed one long penitential process of purification, infused with guilt and self-accusation for their past worldly existence as well as for the

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[1] On asceticism as a phenomenon of self-shrinkage, see B.J. Malina, "Pain, Power, and Personhood: Ascetic Behavior in the Ancient Mediterranean," in V.L. Wimbush and R. Valantasis (eds.), *Asceticism* (New York – Oxford, 1995), 162–177.

[2] Evagrius Ponticus, *Praktikos* 48, ed. A. Guillaumont and C. Guillaumont, *SC* 171 (1971). For an English translation see J.E. Bamberger, *Evagrius Ponticus: The Praktikos* (Kalamazoo, 1981); Evagrius, *Antirrheticus*, Prologue, p. 472 (ed. W. Frankenberg, *Evagrios Ponticus*; Abhandlungen der königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen; Philol. Hist. Klasse, Neue Folge 13,2; Berlin, 1912).

[3] Evagrius, *Praktikos* 6–14. On the development of the concept of major vices or sins, see A. Solignac, "Péchés capitaux," *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* 12, cols. 853–862.

[4] For the literary sources of the story of Thais, see F. Nau, "Histoire de Thaïs," *Annales de Musée Guimet* 30 (3) (1911): 53–112.

persistence—albeit on a new, mental level—of their constant state of sin. The subject of penitence in Early Byzantine monasticism has recently been dealt with by my colleague Bruria Biton Ashkelony, so I may leave it aside.[5]

One of the great achievements of the Egyptian Desert Fathers was their introspective cultivation and their discernment of thoughts and mental movements of the heart as a text requiring decipherment by a spiritual father—in other words, the discovery of a new alphabet of the heart.[6] However, the collections of the Sayings of the Desert Fathers (*apophtegmata patrum*) are mostly anecdotal and hagiographic and the writings of Evagrius are markedly theoretical, systematic and general. The writings of the protagonists of the monastic center of Gaza stand in striking contrast to these. To quote Lucien Regnault, "What the Sayings of the Desert Fathers let us glimpse only in the form of transitory flashes, is here played out before our very eyes like a film."[7]

Monastic life flourished in the region of Gaza from the fourth to the seventh century. As with the first known monk of Palestine, Hilarion, a native of the region, the monastic influence of Egypt and its environs was felt throughout the period.[8] Nevertheless, Gaza monasticism assumed an independent physiognomy, reflected in the outstanding personalities and ascetic writings that emerged especially in the fifth and sixth centuries.[9]

Gaza was also an important center for—possibly even the place of origin—of the formation and transmission of the *apophtegmata* tradition.[10] In the mid-fifth century Gaza monasticism became a core

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[5] See B. Bitton-Ashkelony, "Penitence in Late Antique Monastic Literature" (in this volume, pp. 179–194).

[6] *Apophtegmata*, Alphabetical, Arsenius 6, *PG* 65, 88–89; English translation by B. Ward, *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers, the Alphabetical Collection* (Kalamazoo 1984); P. Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York 1988), 229.

[7] See L. Regnault in Brown, *Body and* Society, 233.

[8] On Egyptian monastic relations with Palestinian monasticism, see S. Rubenson, "The Egyptian Relations of Early Palestinian Monasticism," in A. O'Mahony, G. Göran and K. Hintlian (eds.), *The Christian Heritage in the Holy Land* (London 1995), 35–46.

[9] For general surveys of Gaza monasticism, see L. Perrone, "Monasticism in the Holy Land: From the Beginnings to the Crusades," *Proche-orient chrétien* 45 (1995), 48–52; idem, "I Padri del monachesimo di Gaza (IV–VI sec.): la fedeltà allo spirito delle origini," *La Chiesa nel Tempo* 13 (1997), 87–116.

[10] L. Regnault, "Les Apophtegmes des Pères en Palestine aux V^{e}–VI^{e} siècles," *Irénikon* 54 (1981), 320–330.

of monophysite resistance led by the Georgian monk Peter, otherwise known as Peter the Iberian, and by his friend Abba Isaiah of Egypt.[11] Abba Isaiah lived in seclusion, maintaining contact with the outside world only through a disciple, yet at the same time continuing the supervision of his monastery and his spiritual direction, reflected in the ascetic collection attributed to him, the *Asceticon*.[12] This peculiar model of spiritual guidance was continued in the next generation by the pair of recluses Barsanuphius and John, who lived in seclusion within the coenobium of Seridus at Thabatha, the birthplace of Hilarion, south of Gaza. The two old men supervised the life of the monastery through the mediation of Abbot Seridus and maintained an intensive correspondence, relating to their spiritual guidance, with monks, churchmen and laymen, including the highest religious and political authorities of the province. More than eight hundred letters have survived and form a unique source for the study of early Byzantine monasticism.[13] One of their disciples, Dorotheus, became the confidant of John and later founded a new monastery, where he continued the tradition of their spiritual guidance, fusing the tradition of the Desert Fathers with the model of Basilian communal

[11] See A. Kofsky, "Peter the Iberian: Pilgrimage, Monasticism and Ecclesiastical Politics in Byzantine Palestine," *Liber Annus* 47 (1997), 209–222.

[12] On Abba Isaiah and the attribution of the *Asceticon* to him, see H. Keller, "L'abbé Isaïe-le-Jeune," *Irénikon* 16 (1939) 113–126; L. Regnault, "Isaïe de Scété ou de Gaza? Notes critiques en marge d'une Introduction au problème isaïen," *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique* 46 (1970), 33–44; D.J. Chitty, "Abba Isaiah," *Journal of Theological Studies* 22 (1971), 47–72; The *Asceticon* was written originally in Greek but was transmitted in various recensions. For the Greek edition see Augoustinos Monachos (ed.) Jerusalem 1911 (2nd ed. S.N. Schoinas, Volos 1962); Syriac recensions by R. Draguet, *Les cinq recensions de l'Ascéticon syriaque d'abba Isaïe* I–IV, *CSCO* 289–290; 293–294 (1968). Coptic Fragments by A. Guillamont, *L'Asceticon copte de l'abbé Isaïe*, Cairo 1956; A French expanded translation in *Abbé Isaïe, Recueil ascétique*, Int. L. Regnault, tr. H. De Broc, (Abbaye de Bellefontaine 1985[3]). References here are to the paragraph subdivision of the latter edition.

[13] For a brief review of Barsanuphius and John see I. Hausherr, "Barsanuphe," *Dictionnaire de la Spiritualité* 1, 1255–1262. A critical edition of the Greek text of the first 124 letters of the correspondence, with an English translation by D.J. Chitty, is *Barsanuphius and John, Questions and Answers* PO 31/3; Paris, 1966). A new critical edition with a French translation of the first seventy one letters and a long introduction was recently published by F. Neyt, P. de Angelis-Noah and L. Regnault in *SC* 426 (1997). The whole Greek text was published by Nicodemus Hagiorites, Venice 1816 (2nd ed. by S.N. Schoinas, Volos 1960). For a French translation, including additional Georgian material, see *Barsanuphe et Jean de Gaza, Correspondance.* Recueil complet traduit du grec et du géorgien par les moins de Solesmes (Solesmes 1993[2]). References here are to the enumeration of the latter edition.

monasticism. His teachings were assembled in his *Instructions*.[14]

I wish to examine here some theoretical and practical aspects relating to sin as reflected in the writings of these monastic leaders, who represent three generations of what may be called the monastic school of Gaza.

Abba Isaiah

The *logoi* of the *Asceticon* of Abba Isaiah resemble, in both content and form, certain letters of Barsanuphius rather than the *Instructions* of Dorotheus. Most of them are probably based on letters of spiritual guidance, with no intention of creating a literary work, and were edited by his disciple Peter and perhaps by Peter's disciples.[15] As might be expected from the monastic background of Isaiah, the work shows some resemblance to earlier monastic literature such as the *Apophtegmata*, the *Lausiac History* of Palladius, the letters of Antony, the writings of Evagrius and Pachomian literature. It is not a scientific work but one that transmits monastic teachings and accumulated experience. Compared with the *Apophtegmata* it is notable for its didactic and pedagogic character. It basically constitutes a manual of instructions, opinions and advice covering most of the situations of ascetic life and specifying in concrete detail the prime duties of the semi-anchorite monk. Thus it differs from the hermitic reality of the *Apophtegmata* and Evagrius and deals with a more complex cenobitic-hermitic situation, one that precludes the application of the dichotomous psychological and Evagrian distinctions.

According to Abba Isaiah the great challenge facing the ascetic is not so much the solitary life in the cell as the constant struggle against evil thoughts aroused by demonic machinations (21,13). This struggle involves a continuous process of obliterating and preempting external memories that may give rise to passions (*pathos*) and evil

[14] For the critical edition of the *Instructions* and other minor writings of Dorotheus with a French translation and with an introduction by L. Regnault and J. de Préville, see *Dorothée de Gaza. Oeuvres spirituelles*, SC 92 (1963); For an English translation with an introduction by E.P. Wheeler, see *Dorotheos of Gaza, Discourses and Sayings* (Kalamazoo 1977). For general studies of Dorotheus, see Regnault and Préville, *Dorothée de Gaza*, 9–97; Wheeler, *Dorotheos of Gaza*, 19–74.

[15] Regnault, *Abbé Isaïe*, 16–17; idem, "Isaïe de Scété ou de Gaza? Notes critiques en marge d'une Introduction au problème isaïen," *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique* 46 (1970), 40.

thoughts, such as the memory of family (4,27), people who had hurt the monk (4,28) or images forming in his mind as a consequence of erotic dreams (*phantasia synousias en tê nukti*, 4,30). The monk must avoid forming social relations with his fellow monks that create a situation of dependence and captivity (*aichmalôsia*, 5,9; 30,4) and avoid any external curiosity (3,54). The guiding principle is to return immediately to the monastic cell in order to mourn one's sins (1,18; 3,32). Weeping for one's sins (*penthos*) brings peace and harmony to the soul (6,1; 9,9).[16] The general goal is to maintain a constant mental disposition of fear of God (*phobos tou theou*) and innocence before God (9,10; 9,21). However, this general goal gives impetus to the cultivation of intense dynamics of sin, where practically every external situation creates an opportunity for committing a sin that is generally conceived of as deriving from erroneous will (*telêma*) exploited and manipulated by demonic vices (4,75; 4,115). This psychological process requires an ever-growing vigilance in order to avoid errors or minor sins, which are now conceived of as major sins, and to expose unconscious sins. For example, creating circumstances that invite a sin constitutes in itself a sin (4,33). Moreover, even if we are unconscious of a sin, examining ourselves we will discern that sin perpetrated against us by others, and we must therefore perform penitence (*metanoia*) as if we ourselves had indeed committed this sin (4,32). On the other hand, Isaiah warns against preoccupation with sins that took place before the adoption of monasticism, and regarding them as unforgiven, because their remembrance may bring them back to life (9,1).[17] One must struggle against any distraction (*perispasmos*) of the mind. This is termed the asceticism of the soul (*he askêsis tês psychês*)—namely, a constant mental concentration (*nêpsis*) and hatred of distraction (15,92; 16,57; 30,5b). Through an on ongoing process of constant consciousness of sin as a precondition for a full separation from the world (1,33; 23,4),[18] daily examination of one's

[16] On the monastic ideal of compunction (*penthos*) see I. Hausherr, *Penthos, La doctrine de la componction dans l'Orient chrétien, Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 132 (Rome 1944).

[17] According to Evagrius, former experiences motivated by passions create passionate memories, *Praktikos* 34. However, Evagrius does prescribe the remembrance and meditation of former life and past sins. See *Prakikos* 33. On the role of memory and the doctrine of forgetting sins, see also John Cassian, *Conferences* XX,11, E. Pichery's edition, *SC* 64 (1959), 70–71.

[18] The remembrance of sins also serves as a preemptive meditative technique against preoccupation with the sins of others (4,10; 8,67; 23,5). It is actually a sin for a monk in his cell to neglect meditation of his sins in favor of studying Scripture

conscience, the admission of errors and a quest for pardon (4,8; 16,38), prayers (25,9) and the assistance of the spiritual father, scientific self-reform is at work.[19] The cornerstone for the spiritual culture of the monk is the power of discernment (*diakrisis*) of various types of thoughts (*logismoi*) surfacing in the stream of consciousness (16,55; 58; 16,114), but it requires continuous humility towards others (9,15; 8,53), and the suppression of self-will (*thelêma*, 20,3; 26,11) and self-confidence (30,5c)—emotions that arouse the demons of enmity and sadness (*lypê*, 6,1)—and a knowledge of the negative tendencies active unconsciously in the soul (26,23). The ascetic must always regard himself as a sinner, avoid judging anyone and still his thoughts (7,15). The proof that one's sins are pardoned is a profound sense of equanimity, when nothing relating to one's sin arouses any interior movement in the heart or, alternately, when that sin is mentioned by someone and it no longer provokes in one any memory of one's sin (8,61). The innocence of infancy is idealized as the state of monastic perfection, as the infant embodies all virtues and qualities desired in a monk (25,4). In fact, the monastic ideal is even described as a restoration of the state of "holy infancy" (*hagia nêpiotês*, 25,7), and the penitent monk regains the state of a baby, sheltered in the bosom of his mother (25,19).

The *Asceticon* of Abba Isaiah comprises mostly practical advice and instruction. Although he normally avoids theological dialectics and polemics, and even warns against dabbling in theology (26,18),[20] his work also has something of a theorizing speculation, which creates a solid basis and an ideological framework for the practical, sophisticated struggle against the multifaceted manifestation of sin within the ascetic psyche. Isaiah's ideological concept of sin, traditionally combining soteriology and anthropology, also indirectly reflects his monophysite stance, which is entirely absent from his purely ascetic teachings.[21] This theoretical framework appears mainly in *logoi* 2 and

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before he is in full control of himself (*ibid.*). On the danger inherent in the study of Scripture, see *Apophtegmata*, Amoun 3.

[19] Performing everything with science (*en gnôsei* or *meta gnôseôs*)—namely methodically and with correct knowledge—is a recurrent motif throughout the *Asceticon*, epitomized in the maxim "Happy are those whose works were done scientifically" (17,3).

[20] A tendency expressed in the *Apophtegmata* by Zeno, an older contemporary of Isaiah in the region of Gaza (*Apophtegmata*, Zeno 4) and followed by Barsanuphius as well. See Barsanuphius, *Correspondence* 600, 604, 694, 695.

[21] This explains why those like Barsanuphius and John and Dorotheus, who in

21 of the *Asceticon*. According to Isaiah the foundation and goal of Christian asceticism is restoration of the original human state through imitation of Jesus and with his assistance. The natural state of humanity is the paradisical state of Adam. With Adam's sin all his faculties were transformed into a state of counter-nature (2,1). Thus the state of sin after the Fall is characterized as counter-nature (*paraphysis* or *to para physin*), and sins are *paraphyseis* (8,22; 17,4; 18,3). According to Isaiah animals are superior to man in his fallen, distorted nature, because they have preserved their original nature. In order to restore his natural state man must act like an animal, which has no self-will and no knowledge of its own (8,60). The ideal, natural human will contained seven positive wills, or a kind of positive passions. These natural wills and positive passions were distorted by the "enemy" into a shameful will containing the seven negative passions, or vices, which became the root of all sin (2,6; 2,10).[22] This scheme enabled Isaiah to introduce into his concept of ideal human nature and counter-nature the psychological classification of the passions. He thus created two parallel psychological systems: a positive psychology of will and passions according to nature, and a negative one of passions according to counter-nature. This positive psychology now becomes a vital tool in the ascetic warfare against our existential negative mental forces. A residue of the natural positive passions somehow remained with us after the Fall and serves us to fight our mental demons in the quest to restore the sinless state of nature (2,5–10). Anger according to nature, for example, checks the activity of counter-nature forces (17,8; 21,56).[23] This, however, cannot be

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the sixth century accepted Chalcedon, would not be ashamed to be inheritors of Abba Isaiah; later, Chalcedonians and even Nestorians admired his work. See Chadwick, "Abba Isaiah," 70; A. Guillaumont, "Une notice syriaque inédite sur la vie de l'abbé Isaïe," *Analecta Bollandiana* 67 (1949), 360. It may also explain, however, why writers such as Zosimas and Dorotheus avoid citing him by name. See Regnault, "Isaïe de Scété ou de Gaza?" 40. Sophronius, on the other hand, later condemned a certain Dorotheus as a monophysite and anathematized the followers of a certain Barsanuphius *Epist. Synod. ad Sergium, PG* 87, 3192–3193). See Regnault & Préville, *Dorothée de Gaza*, 107–109 and Neyt & de Angelis-Noah, *Barsnauphe et Jean de Gaza, Correspondance* (SC 426), 24–25. Wheeler raises the possibility that Barsanuphius, John and Dorotheus were actually crypto-monophysites. See Wheeler, *Dorotheos*, 71.

[22] We may note the deviation from the Evagrian scheme of eight vices. For the various branches of these seven vices, see *Asceticon* 7,18–24. Two notable sub-vices are the desire to teach, which nourishes anger, and forgetfulness, which is perceived as the mother of all vices, destroying all ascetic accomplishments.

[23] On the positive dimension of anger, see also Evagrius, *Praktikos* 24.

achieved without divine intervention. Jesus, in his body immune from sin, has restored the sinless original nature of Adam and opened the way to salvation—namely, to the restoration of counter-nature faculties to their natural state (2,2–3; 8,60)—by teaching the way of return to the state of original creation by means of asceticism (2,11). With the initial forswearing of the world, monastic asceticism is directed towards restoring the ideal circumstances of the original creation,[24] and the lost internal union between spirit, soul and body under the rule of mind (17,2). Only the passions separate the monk from the ideal nature of Jesus (21,17). Progress is achieved when the passions are dead and harmony is reestablished among the various parts of human nature (13,3; 17,2; 23,11). The interior union of human nature by a long process of overcoming the internal divisions of counter-nature in the state of sin becomes, therefore, the condition and expression of the restored union with God. Following Pauline terminology, Isaiah regards this transformed human nature as the "new man" (*anthrôpos kainos*, 8,55). Achieving full conformation with the nature of Jesus is the final goal of ascetic perfection (2,11; 19,3).[25] By shedding all traits of counter-nature the ascetic achieves a virginal state and is worthy of becoming the fiancée of Jesus (25,25).

Barsanuphius and John

In the correspondence of Barsanuphius and his circle we have the rare opportunity to witness the practice of spiritual guidance, normally an oral and intimate affair, documented in its daily and immediate context of questions and answers as a result of the extreme seclusion of the masters.[26] These letters incorporate the teachings of

[24] On the Evagrian concept of first and second creations denoting primordial spiritual existence and corporeal formation, respectively, see Bamberger, *Evagrius Ponticus*, lxxvii.

[25] The monophysite implication of this concept becomes clear as does Isaiah's avoidance of the two natures terminology. A duophysite doctrine would render meaningless the central Christian dogma according to Isaiah and empty ascetic life of its purpose. For an analysis of the monophysite implications of Isaiah's doctrine of nature and counter-nature, see H. Keller, "L'abbé Isaïe," 125. For a brief theological profile of Isaiah, see L. Perrone, *La chiesa di Palestina e le controversie cristologiche. Dal concilio di Efeso (431) al secondo concilio di Costantinopoli (553)* (Brescia 1980), 286–295.

[26] Barsanuphius' extreme seclusion raised the suspicion that he was a figment of

Isaiah but display more markedly a type of concrete and practical spirituality at work. We may watch here the disciples of the great old men in open spiritual combat, in the midst of their difficulties and temptations, and learn of their weaknesses and miseries as well as of their victories and virtues.[27] These questions and answers range over a wide spectrum of issues pertaining to the daily existence of the monk in his semi-cenobitic monastery, moving from the material and seemingly trivial matters to the more spiritual and sublime topics of monastic spirituality. The correspondence also includes many letters covering problems and deliberations of the monks with regard to various aspects of sinful misconduct—such as pride and vainglory, self-will and disobedience, restlessness, social attractions, attitude to visitors, disease and medicine, food, prayers and Scripture, avarice, anger, erotic temptations, women and family and sinful thoughts—as well as to some theological notions and questions of a more general character pertaining to sin. From all these we get a vivid impression not so much of what formally constituted a sin in this peculiar environment but rather of what constituted sinful behavior in the consciousness of these ascetics. Here I propose to illustrate this wide theme with only two of these aspects, with no pretension to exhaust the subject.

Pride and Vainglory

A series of about ninety questions to Barsauphius and John comes from their disciple Dorotheus, who was in charge of the infirmary in the monastery of Seridus, to which Barsanuphius and John belonged.[28] Many of these questions concern pride and vainglorious conduct. Dorotheus actually takes special pride in his correspondence and divulges its content to his fellow monks. This provokes a rebuke from Barsanuphius who accuses him of vainglory in revealing this content in order to gain popularity with the monks (260). Dorotheus is quite restless; he cannot force himself to remain for long in his

abbot Seridus' imagination, which forced him to appear in public to dispel suspicion. See Barsanuphius and John, *Correspondence*, 125. On the subject of monastic spiritual guidance, see I. Hausherr, *Direction spirituelle en Orient autrefois*, *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 144 (Rome 1955).

[27] See *Barsanuphe et Jean de Gaza*, *Correspondance*[2], Int. 21–22.

[28] On the whole correspondence between Dorotheus and the two old men, see F. Neyt, *Les lettres à Dorothée dans la correspondance de Barsanuphe et de Jean de Gaza* (Louvain 1969).

cell and is always looking for some activity. He returns to his cell in the evening depressed, frustrated and disappointed with himself (269). He admits to John that he simply loves company and finds difficulty in avoiding it, although he regards this as a great weakness (307). Thus he embarks on a struggle against his negative mental propensities under the guidance of John and Barsanuphius. Dorotheus asks Barsanuphius whether he should answer on the spot when asked a question, before having thought it over (264), and about the pleasure he gets from a successful deed or answer, which makes him feel wise. He senses his weakness and begs Barsanuphius for the power of silence (*hesychia*). In response Barsanuphius defines the power of being silent as overcoming the urge to speak and the pleasure deriving from it (279). Dorotheus asks John how he is to behave when being praised, to which John answers that it is best to keep quiet (279). However, in a responding letter Dorotheus argues that from his silence the one who praises him might consider the praise accepted and regard this as a manifestation of pride. John answers that the matter is more complicated than that, and one cannot actually tell what the reaction to his silence will be. It may have an edifying effect. In case of misunderstanding, however, he should assure his brother of well meaning (280).

Dorotheus feels that he suffers from a marked propensity to talk to people and asks permission to avoid the company of other monks after his working hours in the infirmary (286). But what is he to do when a useful suggestion comes to his mind? Should he speak out even though he was not asked about the matter? Should he report to the abbot on a matter concerning a senior monk (288)? Is he to answer the questions of a fellow monk when he does know the answer? Should he speak and warn about a useful matter (289)? John answers that the criterion for correct conduct is always a passionless action performed with humility (288, 289). Dorotheus persists: must he be silent when he senses that talking will cause him satisfaction (292)? Concerning talking to senior monks, John advises him to keep silent. Even when asked, he should answer that he does not know (292). In general, one should talk for the sake of others, particularly concerning offensive matters, and report them to the abbot, but keep silent for oneself (294). Dorotheus does just that and reports a certain problematic monk to the abbot. However, he fears that this monk will become his enemy when he discovers that Dorotheus had reported him to the abbot. John answers that this

was a therapeutic measure, and one is not to fear the patient's reaction; eventually he will be grateful for it (297). The situation, however, appears to have been more complex, and Dorotheus is not entirely pleased with his action. He suspects that he may have been spurred by ulterior motives (297). This is indeed a delicate question. One can never be entirely sure of the true reason for one's actions. John therefore insists that Dorotheus must report everything to the abbot, including the evil tendencies lying behind the report on the undisciplined monk; otherwise it is better to keep silent (297). This and similar situations present another moral conflict—reported monks may consequently be hurt, so perhaps it is sometimes better to ignore, conceal or dissimulate in order not to hurt them (299). And what must be the attitude of a reported monk towards the one who reported him? Answer: he must think that the monk who informed on him meant to act in his favor, and treat him with love (301).

Other questions concern seemingly vainglorious conduct in public. For instance, Dorotheus asks whether to receive his food portion in the communal meal even if he has no need of it, so as not to appear as someone who refuses, and save it for the patients in the infirmary (323). Similarly, he is in the habit of closing his eyes in concentration during the public prayer and fears that in so doing he is insulting his fellow monks (325). The general answer of John is to act according to personal need but without pride (323). Finally, Dorotheus admits that there is still some pride left in him, because when he humiliates himself and prostrates himself before others he blushes a little. Should he, therefore, do it intentionally or just at random (302)?

Family, Women and Eros

One of the main tenets of asceticism is the renunciation of women, who came to be regarded as a form of demonic allurement. Sexual abstinence resulted in erotic temptations besetting the monk in his masculine and secluded environment. However, monastic conditions did not necessarily imply a total segregation from women. Monks had opportunities to associate with women while performing errands for the monastery and when pious women visited the monastery. This reality confronted the ascetics with the need to deal with these borderline situations in order to define the line of demarcation in monk—woman relations. This apparently applied, perhaps to an even greater extent, to a whole group of lay devotees who wished to imitate

monastic values and constantly sought spiritual guidance from Barsanuphius and John. Thus we encounter a series of questions raised by a monk who was often sent on missions for the monastery. What should he do when invited by friends; is he allowed to dine in the company of women? The answer, quite expectedly, is in the negative (354). But how can he tell if there will be a woman there? The answer is that he must find out about it in advance. But what if he unexpectedly finds himself in this situation without anticipating it? The answer is that he must apologize and leave (354). Moreover, women prostitutes exist for the sake of fighting monks (461).[29] Aelianus, the abbot succeeding Seridus, was a pious layman before he simultaneously became a monk, a priest and an abbot in an irregular procedure (574–576). He relates in a letter to John how pious women and mothers of monks come to visit the monastery and stay in an external, adjacent cell, with windows facing the interior court. Aelianus asks whether he may speak to them through these windows? He further writes John about his wife, whom he left in the care of relatives. She does not care to stay with them any longer. Is he permitted to talk with her when she comes for a visit and look after her affairs? John answers that it is permitted to accept visits of pious women and mothers of monks, and talk with them if necessary. Regarding Aelianus' wife, he must speak with her occasionally and take care of her needs throughout her life and the needs of the children until they reach the right path (595). Another monk consults John whether to assist a widow in writing a letter to the governor concerning a certain injustice done to her. Will it harm his ascetic discipline? John's answer is decisive: do not help her—you are dead to the world. The dead do not worry about such matters (213).

Indeed thoughts, memories and longings for wife, children and family left behind were a great cause of pain and consternation. The pain of separation is expressed by monks in letters to the old men. Barsanuphius and John leave no doubt as to the negative effect of these feelings. John replies that the worry of the monk for his family prevents the care of God. A monk must suppress his preoccupation with and memory of his family, which give rise to this passion (128). The pain of separation is only temporary (129). Barsanuphius seems to be somewhat harsher on this subject: the memory of family members comes from the devil (138)!

[29] See also Dorotheus' personal experience, *Instructions* 9,98.

The advice to pious laymen concerning women is not much different. In reply to a question as to how to behave when there is a need to talk with women, and whether to get involved in their affairs, John writes that relations with women bring only trouble. One must avoid talking to them as much as possible, even if their behavior is impeccable. When there is no choice and one must talk with them, one must beware of them as of fire. In general, a person who devotes himself to God is better using a mediator in his dealings with women. He should avoid looking at them and lingering in their company—it is the devil's snare (662).

The more difficult, mental struggle, resulting from sexual abstinence, has an autonomous existence in the depth of the soul in one's most solitary hours. According to ascetic ethical psychology, it indicates a moral imperfection or sin which is conceived of as a demonic reality waging battle in the monk's heart. This is one of the most famous themes of Christian monastic tradition, going back to Anthony. In the correspondence we have some direct documentation of this persistent psychological reality. A monk who sees various images night and day, some accompanied by temptations, others not, turns to John for guidance. John answers that all these images are one and the same, appearing in different guises. They aim to confuse his mind and cast doubt in his heart. As a remedy John prescribes Forty-nine genuflections while citing the formula: "Lord, forgive me for the sake of your holy name" (168). Barsanuphius answers in the same vein a monk who has complained about the appearance in his thoughts of the demon in feminine form. Thoughts, says Barsanuphius, are the prey of demons; the remedy is labor, which prevents thoughts (193). We should not be surprised that John and Barsanuphius do not instruct these monks in the more sophisticated technique of discerning thoughts and demonic images, since in their opinion these meditative techniques are appropriate only to advanced or perfected ascetics (e.g., 138, 431, 432).

Erotic images in dreams are often accompanied by what is referred to in the letters as "nocturnal movement" (*he kinêsis en tê nykti*) or "nocturnal events" (*ta upo nykta symbainonta*)—namely, erotic stimulation. Depending on their source, whether natural or demonic, these "movements" may be indicative of moral flaws and demonic presence.[30] A monk

[30] According to Evagrius, dreams are the reflection of passions in reality. See *Praktikos* 55.

asks John about his "nocturnal movements"—how to discern whether they are natural or demonic. John replies that the devil cannot continue acting without the nocturnal arousal and pleasure of the monk.[31] On the other hand, such "movement" is considered natural if the soul maintains its calmness during this nightly experience.[32] Perfect ascetics, however, are immune from even natural arousal which they have suppressed; they have become spiritual eunuchs (169).[33] These nocturnal events were distressing and frustrating and created a sense of moral imperfection and even pollution or impurity, as is evident from the letters. One desperate ascetic goes so far as to ask Barsanuphius for the impossible—a personal interview, in order to overcome his nightly erotic fantasies (231). The former monk consulted John further as to whether he should attend mass following such a night of erotic images (170) and whether he should discuss these nocturnal appearances with other monks. The answer is instructive—he should discuss it, but not with the young monks (171).

Dorotheus

Dorotheus, probably after the death of John and Abbot Seridus, and the final silence that descended on Barsanuphius, has left the monastery and founded his own coenobium in the vicinity.[34] His instructions and letters to his monks, collected by his disciples after his death, are the only extant part of his work.[35] The *Instructions*, marked by their simple and direct style, show Dorotheus, who received a classical education,[36] as a keen observer of human nature and a fine psychologist. In his work he combined patristic tradition and the ascetic

[31] Mental consent to illicit pleasure is considered by Evagrius to be a grievous sin. See *Praktikos 75*.

[32] According to Evagrius this is proof of having achieved the ideal of *Apatheia*. See *Praktikos* 64.

[33] On the effects of an extremely ascetic dietary regime on sexual functions, see W.C. Bushell, "Psychophysiological and Comparative Analysis of Ascetico-Meditational Discipline: Toward a New Theory of Asceticism," in Wimbush and Valantasis (eds.), *Asceticism*, 553–575.

[34] See Regnault and Préville, *Dorothée*, 27. For a different analysis of Dorotheus' later career, see Wheeler, *Dorotheos*, 59–67. P. Canivet suggested that Dorotheus had to leave the monastery because of his possible Origenist sympathies, see P. Canivet, "Dorothée de Gaza, est-il un disciple d'Évagre?" *Revue des études grecques* 78 (1965), 338.

[35] Regnault and Préville, *Dorothée*, 33–34.

[36] *Ibid.*, 12.

teachings of the *Apophtegmata*, Evagrius, Basil, Zosimas,[37] and especially Isaiah (albeit without naming him), and his personal experience with his teachers Barsanuphius and John. His main concern, however, was the adaptation of these teachings to his purely cenobitic reality; hence the shift of emphasis regarding various aspects of ascetic life.

With Dorotheus we enter a phase of preservation and systematization in Gaza monasticism. His lectures are vivid and attractive, interweaving his topics with anecdotes and personal experience; but there is hardly anything in them that is not traditional. Dorotheus' originality lies in his sober and concrete adaptation of this heritage to his cenobitic reality.[38] I will present only one theoretical aspect of his teachings regarding sin, revealing some different nuances of emphasis and detail.

Following Abba Isaiah, but more emphatically so, Dorotheus wished to integrate his ascetic teachings on sin into a patristic theology of salvation history. This concern comprises the opening section of the first Instruction (On Renunciation). Adam was created perfect in his nature and in perfect mental and physical health. His existence in paradise was that of constant prayer and contemplation (1,1).[39] In consequence of his sin he fell from a state according to nature (*kata physin*) to a state contrary to nature (*para physin*), or counter-nature—the concept and terms are familiar from Abba Isaiah.[40] In this counter-nature state man became a prey to sin (*hamartolia*) and passions (1,1), and the sinful condition of humanity constantly worsened. Christ, as a New Adam, restored the complete, original and sinless state of

[37] Zosimas, also mentioned by the sixth-century historian Evagrius (*HE* 4,7), was a native of the region of Tyre who founded a monastery near Caesarea in the early sixth century. He was the author of the *Alloquia* (*PG* 78, 1680–1701), which influenced Dorotheus. See also S. Vailhé, "Saint Dorothée et saint Zosime," *Echos d'orient* 4 (1900/1901), 359–363.

[38] Regnault and Préville, *Dorothée*, 44; L. Regnault, "Théologie de la vie monastique selon Barsanuphe et Dorothée," in *Théologie de la vie monastique* (Paris 1961), 315–322.

[39] It seems that Dorotheus considered Adam's sin to be primarily one of disobedience, whereas the most vital virtue of cenobitic life is that of obedience, as repeatedly stressed by Barsanuphius and John and by Dorotheus himself. On the concept of obedience in Dorotheus, see T. Spidlik, "Le concept de l'obéissance et de la conscience selon Dorothée de Gaza," *Studia Patristica* XI/2 (1972), 72–78. On the tendency in ascetic circles to regard the original sin not as sexual but rather as the result of greed and lust for food, see Brown, *Body and Society*, 220.

[40] This concept and terminology appear also in the correspondence of Barsanuphius and John; see e.g. 245.

human nature and opened before man the possibility to liberate himself from the involuntarily sinful existence to which he was subject. From then on sin became a deliberate choice and not a predetermined condition (1,4). This purification and liberation from the past sinful existence was initiated by baptism. The inclination to sin persisted, however, and God therefore issued commandments to bring about the purification not only of sins but of the passions as well (1,5). It is here, that Dorotheus reintroduces, in contrast to Evagrius, Isaiah, Barsanuphius and John, his clear and sober distinction between sins and passions as the root cause of sin: "Sins constitute the gratification of these passions: when a man acts and brings into corporeal reality those works which were suggested to him by his passions. It is certainly possible to have the passions and not set them to action" (1,5). This is indeed a relatively modest ascetic goal, one suited to the moderate circumstances of communal monasticism. It is here that we realize the ascetic orientation of Dorotheus' concept of salvation history. Christ actually awakened our dormant inner man, or conscience—namely, the power of distinction (*diakrisis*) between good and evil (1,6). Dorotheus elsewhere specifies that this conscience (*syneidêsis*) was a divine gift bestowed upon Adam in paradise (against the literal meaning of Genesis 3,22), which constitutes the ideal natural law (*physikos nomos*), as opposed to the later mundane written law (3,40). It was precisely the aim of Christ to teach men how to discern the mental mechanisms of committing sin and how to cleanse the passions leading to sin through the cultivation of ascetic virtues (1,5). The ultimate ascetic goal remains, however, even for Dorotheus, the complete extirpation of passions (*aprospatheia*), which leads to the Evagrian ideal of serene *apatheia* (1,20).[41]

Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, I cite the words of Folly regarding the Apostles in Erasmus' *Praise of Folly*: "They detest sin, but on my life I'll swear they couldn't offer a scientific definition of what we call sin, unless they'd been trained in the Scotist spirit."[42] The ascetics of the Gaza

[41] On the Evagrian ideal of *apatheia*, see Evagrius, *Praktikos* 2; 81; Bamberger, *Evagrius Ponticus*, lxxxii–lxxxvii.

[42] Trans. by B. Raddice, Introduction and notes by A.H.T. Levi (London – New York 1993), 91.

region certainly came a long way in their existential science and definitions of sin, but they are a still world away from the academic preoccupations of scholasticism.

We have seen some theoretical and practical aspects of the cultivation of the consciousness of sin and its application to various forms of monastic life, as reflected by representatives of three generations of Gaza monasticism, between the mid-fifth and late sixth centuries. Their ascetic writings and teachings were embraced by Eastern orthodox and heterodox Christianity, and partly by Western Christianity,[43] and they have survived as a vital source of inspiration in contemporary Eastern monasticism—an indication of their profound insight into ascetic psychology and practice, which cuts through centuries of monastic experience.

[43] See Regnault and Préville, *Dorothée*, 90–97; L. Regnault, "Monachisme orientale et spiritualité ignatienne. L'influence de S. Dorothée sur les écrivains de la Compagnie de Jésus," *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique* 33 (1957), 141–149.

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